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**An Exploration of Social and Cultural
Aspects of Motorcycling
During the Interwar Period.**

Christopher Thomas Potter

PhD

2007

**An Exploration of Social and Cultural
Aspects of Motorcycling
During the Interwar Period.**

By

Christopher Thomas Potter

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the
University of Northumbria at Newcastle
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In

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Abstract

This thesis covers social and cultural aspects of the motorcycling movement during the interwar period of 1919 to 1939. Using contemporary records of both written and oral nature, a diverse set of themes are explored, beginning with the origins of the motorcycle enthusiasm, from its invention towards the end of the nineteenth century, to the dawn of the twenties, when for a while it held the dominant position in personal motorised transport, until through processes of economics such as the trickle down theory of consumer goods ownership, dominance was transferred to the motorcar. Next, the phenomenon of motorcycling clubs, their composition, practices and distribution, is covered in detail. Turning towards gender issues, the place women held within the movement is discussed. Despite a persistent element of male dominance within the pastime, some women held a prominent position, many achieving fame and acclaim both at a personal and national level. In the next chapter, legislative processes are covered, following governmental and police force involvement in controlling the increasing numbers of motorists of all types. Here, a special study of magistrates' records for the Darlington area provides a snapshot, which complements the national trends. Social class issues regarding the choice of motorized transport are addressed in the next chapter, allowing for a discussion of the wider, national picture and concentrating upon an analysis of the social structure of motorcyclists in the Darlington area, derived from records of registrations of 1920 machines. The motorcycle's place in art and related cultural themes is discussed in chapter six, allowing for analysis of artistic genre such as Futurism, Bauhaus, and other forms of modernist interpretation. Literary links with motorcycling, either through enthusiast journals or mainstream literature is explored, together with film and music, to provide an overview of motorcycling in these themes. Overall, the thesis discusses a wide range of hitherto unexplored themes relating to motorcycling during this era, and attempts to shed new light upon an important set of elements within social and cultural history.

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List of Abbreviations.

A. C. U.	Auto Cycle Union.
B. M. C. A.	British Motor Cycle Association.
B. C. M. C. M. T. U.	British Cycle & Motor Cycle Manufacturers Traders Union.
B. S. A.	Birmingham Small Arms.
C. P. R. E.	Council for the Protection of Rural England.
I. M. T. C.	International Motorcyclist's Tour Club.
M.C.C	Motor Cycling Club.
M.R.C.	University of Warwick Modern Records Centre.
N. H. R. A.	National Hot Rod Association.
N. S. F. A.	National Safety First Association.
P. O. V. C.	Post Office Vehicles Club.
S. C. L.	Solihull Central Library.
S. M. M. T.	Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders.
T. W. A. S.	Tyne & Wear Archives Service.
V. M. C. C.	Vintage Motor Cycle Club.

Acknowledgement.

This work has been undertaken in order that a long existing gap in the social history of transport is filled. Motorcycling history tends to concentrate upon economics and the industry, often providing the stories of major marques, or in club histories written by enthusiasts. This thesis is intended to partially remedy this omission and provide insight into the processes involved in being a motorcyclist during an important period for this subject. It could not have been completed without the valued assistance of the following, for which I am extremely grateful:

Firstly, I would like to thank, my two supervisors, Dr. Bill Lancaster and Dr. Sean O'Connell, who provided invaluable assistance in all stages of the process, the latter having done work on the same theme on the motorcar. Dr. Steve Koerner, whose help and work on the economic side of the subject was invaluable, and whose enthusiasm for motorcycling shines out in his work. The various archival sources were always staffed by efficient and informative people. Most exceptional of these was Annice Collett, the librarian at the Vintage Motorcycle Club archives at Burton upon Trent, who was a mine of information and help during my frequent visits. I must express enormous gratitude to my interviewees, who were the most valuable way of finding out what it was like, by actually being there at the time.

Finally, I am undyingly grateful for the patience of my partner Bridget, for putting up with all the mess involved in the process as well as supporting the family, and my two children, Benjamin and Josie, for (usually) managing to be relatively well behaved, whilst Dad was doing his 'serious work'.

Author's Declaration.

I hereby certify that the following thesis which I now submit is entirely my own work, and to the best of my knowledge has not been taken from others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work. It has not been submitted for any other award either at the University of Northumbria or any other establishment.

Name:

Signed:

Registration no: 01931111

Date:

Introduction.

Writing in 1993, T. C. Barker pointed out one of the major flaws in the historical analysis of transport:

‘For the last half century this has clearly been a promising subject for present-minded historians. Yet, despite its growing importance, they have been quite slow to turn their attention to it; and when they did so, they concentrated mainly upon motor cars, and motor car *manufacture*, to what is in fact business, rather than transport history, relatively straightforward to write in terms of the business leaders, and household names on the bonnets of cars, with readily accessible company and family records.’¹

The intellectual reasoning for this thesis is based upon an agreement with the above statement, with the assertion that little has changed during the intervening period, and the author’s realisation of a need to fill a gap in the annals of transport history and to some extent analyse the founders of the motorcycling sub-culture, which today is widespread and diverse in nature and content. Historians’ dealings with motorized transport, with some important exceptions, have indeed tended to concentrate upon economic analyses of makes of machine and the development of the technology rather than its impact upon society. This is especially true for motorcycling. Therefore, the main aim of this thesis is to correct an imbalance and concentrate upon elements of motorcycling previously overlooked by scholars. Another aim is to analyse the interwar motorcyclist in the light of the post war phenomena of biker culture. To achieve this, the author has set out to produce a broad contextual analysis of social, cultural aspects of the subject, as well as economic ones. An attempt has been made to follow the tradition of common sense positivism, epitomised by Leopold von Ranke’s directive to find out ‘how things actually were,’ whilst working in a humanistic vein using literary, thematic and documentary-archival approaches.²

¹ Barker, T. C., ‘Slow progress, forty years of motoring research.’ *Journal of Transport History*. 14 (1993) p.142.

² Evans, R. J., *In Defence of History*. (Granta: London, 1997) p.17. Also of use in formulating a method for undertaking this study were, Berger, S., Felding, H., & Passmore, K., (eds.) *Writing History: Theory and Practice*. (London: Arnold, 2003), Howell, M., & Prevenier, W., *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction*

This thesis draws heavily from localised sources in the County Durham area. It is intended that, as a local case study snapshot, some aspects of interwar motorcycling can be created, which can be compared with national trends. Also, some reference is made to European and American trends where appropriate, especially in areas of machine development, the gradual dominance of the motorcar and artistic movements such as Futurism or Art Deco. The majority of the primary source documents for the localised part of the study were found in Durham County Records Office at County Hall in Durham. These consisted of magistrate's records from which a picture of the implementation of traffic law could be constructed, and vehicle registration ledgers, from which some data on motorcycle use, and the social spectrum of riders could be found. Beamish Museum provided bound volumes of contemporary police journals, to add their experience of the subject, and *Punch* magazine, cartoons, which also proved a valuable source of satirical opinion.

In addition to this, oral testimonies from a number of local and where possible other regional, ex-riders of the period were collected, by means of taped interviews in the subject's homes, which were later transcribed and copied onto digital media following the guidelines provided by Thompson, Perks, Portelli, and others.³ The importance of following correct procedures in conducting the oral interview, to provide previously undocumented experience and personal meanings of events, which not only empowers the social group concerned, but also reveals a new dimension to the world of motorcycling

to Historical Methods. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001) and Lowenthal, D., *The Past is a Foreign Country*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

³ See Thompson, P., *The Voice of the Past. Oral History*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); Perks, R., & Thomson, A., *The Oral History Reader*. (London: Routledge, 1998); Thomson, A., 'Fifty years on: An international perspective on oral history', *The Journal of American History*, 85 No.2, (1998) pp.581 – 595 and Portelli, A., 'The peculiarities of oral history', *History Workshop Journal*, 12 Autumn (1981) pp.97 – 107.

history.⁴ It was noted that during the course of the interviews, memories can be distorted by both time and physical deterioration, and that an inevitable personal bias and subjectivity by the interviewee would be in evidence.⁵ The interviews were conducted with a concern for objectivity on the part of the interviewer, which was nurtured by creating a rapport with the subject, minimising the tape recorder's presence, and using set questions at the start to encourage the subject to 'open up.'⁶ There was a conscious awareness of reflexivity during the interviews, an awareness of the social position of interviewer and subject; that knowledge would be derived from the dialogue.⁷ Valuable information was thus derived from these interviews.

As important as oral sources are to this study, they need to be contextualised in the light of other material. Important amongst these are the archives at the Vintage Motorcycle Club's headquarters at Burton on Trent. These contain collections of contemporary motorcycling journals, and which gave a valuable insight into the great seriousness with which the pursuit was undertaken during this period. Also the University of Warwick's Modern Record Centre provided documents pertaining to the motorcycle industry, giving insight into the degree of co-operation between the industry and its customers, whilst the University of Cambridge library archive of the Vickers Armstrong Whitworth Company was consulted to show how such firms nurtured the pastime through their motor clubs. The internet also prove a valuable resource for a range of information as diverse as, motorcycle club websites, the National Archives at Kew, government websites to ascertain

⁴ Thompson, A., 'Fifty years on:...' p.587.

⁵ Portelli, A., 'The peculiarities...' p.99.

⁶ Thompson, P., *The Voice of the Past...* chapter 6.

⁷ Perks, R., & Thomson, A., *The Oral History Reader...* p.353. This was particularly poignant, as the interviewees were ex-motorcyclists, whilst the interviewer was a motorcyclist. This was important as it tended to set the interviewee more at ease and willing to discuss the subject.

the correct citing of legal documents, and websites covering artistic genre such as Futurism, or cinema.

The current state of the historiography of motorcycling for the interwar period is sparse although improving. A search of the British Library Integrated Catalogue using the term, 'Motorcycling History' will reveal about 30 references; the majority of these being histories of makes of machine.⁸ Although using similar search terms will provide many more apparently relevant examples, these are in the main concerned with more contemporary time periods than those that this thesis will explore. There are a large number of modern travelogue type books to be found, which emphasise the use of the motorcycle as a leisure tool. These can be compared with a number of interwar books of a similar theme, one of the best of these being Robert Edison Fulton's recollections of a trans-world trip, to reveal that the inherent sense of adventure in motorcycle travel still exists.⁹ On a political theme, Suzanne McDonald-Walker's book is concerned with modern riders rights' organisations such as the Motorcycle Action Group and the British Motorcycling Federation, and has been used to provide a comparison with the emerging political awakening of interwar riders brought about by increasingly comprehensive legislation which culminated in the founding of the British Motor Cycle Association.¹⁰ Various books claiming to be histories of motorcycling do exist although they tend to be of the coffee-table variety, and have been used in this work where no other reference sources are available.¹¹ More generally, the social history of transport of many types is well covered in the historiography. For example, *The Economic and Social Effects of the*

⁸ <http://catalogue.bl.uk> (Accessed: 18 April 2007)

⁹ Fulton, R. E., *One Man Caravan*. (1937; New Hampshire: Whitehorse Press, 1996).

¹⁰ McDonald-Walker, S., *Bikers: Culture, Politics and Power*. (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

¹¹ See Ayton, C. Holliday, B. Posthumus, C. & Winfield, M., *The History of Motorcycling*. (London: Orbis Publishing, 1979) or Rogers, M., *The Illustrated History of Speedway*. (Ipswich: Studio Publications, 1978).

Spread of Motor Vehicles,¹² provides a good overall view, whilst Sean O'Connell's work on the motor car is perhaps the seminal work on this element of the subject.¹³ More generally, *The Journal of Transport History* covers a wide a range of subjects of which motorcycling is seldom mentioned, although Steve Koerner's work on the industry has been included.¹⁴ More relevantly, a recently set up internet journal, based at Nova South-Eastern University in Florida, the *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies*, provides both an outlet for academic articles and a forum for pertinent research in the form of a quarterly peer-reviewed journal.¹⁵

The topics involved in this study were chosen to capture and assist analysis of the motorcycling phenomenon. The order in which the thesis is arranged is intended to be a logical progression of relevant subjects that will provide an overall picture of interwar period motorcycling. The first chapter deals with the early development of the pastime up to the end of the period under study. It also gives a general background of the subject and concentrates on various economic factors involved in motorcycle ownership. For instance, the motorcycle combination became increasingly viable as a utilitarian substitute for the horse and cart for the small businessman, prior to the development of the light van. An analysis of key factors regarding this is provided. To show a regional picture of the relative popularity of the motorcycle, records for registrations in the Durham and Darlington areas are analysed. A study of the motorcycle industry's efforts to further popularise and develop the machines in light of increased competition from motorcars is

¹² Barker, T. (ed.), *The Economic and Social Effects of the Spread of Motor Vehicles*. (London: Macmillan, 1987).

¹³ O'Connell, S., *The Car in British Society, Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896 – 1939*. (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998).

¹⁴ Koerner, S., 'The British motor-cycle industry during the 1930s.' *Journal of Transport History*. 16 (1995) pp. 55 - 76 and Koerner, S., 'Four wheels good, two wheels bad: the motor cycle versus the light motor car – 1919 –39' in Thoms, D. Holden, L. & Claydon, T., *The Motor Car & Popular Culture in the 20th Century*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

¹⁵ http://ijms.nova.edu/July2006/IJMS_Resources.AlfordFerriss.html (Accessed: 18 April 2007) See the inaugural issue March 2005 for an article on motorcycle clubs by the author.

included here as a theme warranting investigation, as is the industry's position as a provider of jobs and revenue within the economy.

The second chapter deals with an important social element within the pastime, motorcycle clubs. Historians have overlooked this aspect of associational history. Using a variety of sources, ranging from archives containing contemporary journals, to the oral testimonies of ex-club members, the chapter analyses the social usefulness of clubs based upon a common enthusiasm for motorcycling. The composition of clubs and their activities is explored, with one of the most important conclusions about them being their social-levelling aspect, where riding skill was held in higher esteem than the social class of its membership. Their use as a means of positive propaganda by the industry, and the clubs increasing awareness of governmental legislation are two other important points covered. In his work, *Leisure, Citizenship & Working Class Men in Britain, 1850 – 1945*, Brad Beavan states that during the period 1850 to 1914, the British working classes underwent a process whereby an increasing variety of organised leisure became available under the guise of rational recreation.¹⁶ These took a variety of forms mostly designed to be educational or invigorating and provide a more wholesome alternative to the lower forms of leisure pursuit such as drinking and gambling. The mid-point of this period saw the development of the bicycle which eventually allowed the working classes an affordable form of personal transport. Technical developments in motor engineering allowed bicycles to be fitted with motors, which as the twentieth century progressed, became a relatively affordable and reliable means by which, given the right set of circumstances, the working classes could indulge in transport technology. Lowerson identifies cycling as the most widespread growing pleasure for the British society, which resists, 'historians' attempts to

¹⁶ Beavan, B., *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain, 1850 – 1945*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005). p.16.

identify class specific attributes.’¹⁷ This statement, written in regard to cycling’s early popularity is qualified by the sport’s later adoption by those lower down the social scale. The writer stressed it gave the energetically adventurous the chance to explore rural England. Throughout the interwar period, the journals and other literature emphasised similar benefits for cycling’s motorised cousin in a way that compliments and supplements Lowerson’s study.

Lowerson has stated that there was possible social acumen to be gained from indulging in some form of sporting activity for the middle-classes. Physical fitness requirements made the more athletic of sports less attractive for the over 35 year olds.¹⁸ Many less energetic pastimes became imbued with the language and organisational paraphernalia of sports as a result of this. From the beginning of the twentieth century, this was true for motoring and exemplified by motor clubs. The activities taken part in by motorcycle clubmen and women were of a range and diversity, which met with criteria, which categorised many motorcycle clubs to be sporting. Although club membership was not usually confined to the middle-classes, their executive committees were usually from this sector of society, having the spare time and organisational abilities necessary. Lowerson has also asserted that the social activities of middle-class orientated clubs have sometimes courted the risqué for entertainment as a foil for the decorum inherent in other parts of their social life.¹⁹ The activities of several hundred motorcycle clubs only rarely disclosed an example of risqué behaviour. This was usually in the form of some kind of relatively harmless activity such as a ‘pretty ankle competition’.²⁰

¹⁷ Lowerson, J., *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1870 – 1914*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993). p.116.

¹⁸ Ibid p.95

¹⁹ Ibid p.99

²⁰ See club database in appendix 3.

The third chapter deals with the phenomenon of women riders; emancipated elements in an almost exclusively male dominated pastime. By examining articles directed towards a female readership in contemporary enthusiast journals, as well as some oral testimony, the chapter explores the various hurdles women riders had to surmount in order that they could ride motorcycles. Although contemporary journals were keen to encourage women riders, many of them remained hampered by society's expectations of what was considered appropriate female behaviour, and also economic reasons, both of which are explored and offer an explanation of why women riders were in a minority. In the case of the latter, it was found that social rank increased the likelihood of motorcycle ownership, as did youth and marital status. Coverage of this aspect of motorcycling is intended to complement and add to the canon of feminist orientated historiography, such as the work of Virginia Sharff and Claire Langhamer.²¹ Legislation is covered next. An analysis of governmental attitudes towards the use of powered two-wheelers is made using the parliamentary journal *Hansard*, which showed the increasing governmental concerns for motor transport in the light of escalating numbers of road traffic with the concomitant rise in accidents. The main Acts of Parliament concerning this are scrutinised with regard to disclosing the degree to which the problems associated with motorcycling are addressed. The reaction to subsequent legislation of motorcyclists and the concerns expressed by them is examined through the perusal of letters and articles found in contemporary journals and the oral testimonies of respondents. Through a study of previously overlooked documents relating to local magistrates' and police forces' dealings with errant motorcyclists, the subsequent data provides a snapshot of traffic violation frequency, from which a national picture can be extrapolated.

²¹ Scharff, V., *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age*. (New York: Free Press, 1992) and Langhamer, C., *Women's Leisure in England, 1920 – 1960*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

A social class orientated view of motorcycle ownership follows next showing various factors involved in choice of motor vehicle. This reinforces some of the points discussed in the first chapter. Using some of the pertinent theories concerning consumption, such as those illustrating the trickle down effect and that relating to consumer demand, the chapter attempts to place the choice of motorized transport in relation to the interwar individual's social and economic position. Valuable evidence concerning the range and diversity of the socio-economic circumstances of motorcyclists in the Darlington area in 1920 was found in Durham County Record Office, from which an idea of the sort of person riding motorcycles during this period has been revealed, giving some idea of the national picture. The bulk of this chapter concerns the various ploys used by the motorcar and motorcycle industries in their bid to achieve hegemony and explores some of the subjective and objective influences involved in choosing personal transport.

Chapter six is included to show the extent to which motorcycling influenced various forms of artistic culture. By covering a diverse range of cultural subjects, the chapter investigates the question of how the motorcycle and motorcycling were portrayed in the media, and in doing so, illustrates the means by which the enthusiasm was enjoyed vicariously as well as, in the case of documentary films concerning club-centred sporting activities, in actuality, by riders and the general public. Through an analysis of four of the main cultural forms of the period, literature; art; music and film, a picture of the range of influence of this form of transport is gained. The chapter reveals that although motorcycling was included in the above artistic forms, no-specific art form was created around this form of transport.

The overall conclusion is that there has been scant scholarly interest in the broad social, cultural and economic context of motorcycling. Even authors with a reputation for a sensitivity to the variegated nature of associational life such as Ross McKibbin, Peter Clark, Brad Beavan, or Claire Langhamer, have failed to mention the growth of motorcycling. Each of these writers, overlook the influence of this form of personal transport, in an age when it was relatively new and ultimately liberating. It is the work of Sean O'Connell, Steve Koerner and H. F. Moorehouse, which provide a partial solution to this lack of academic interest in personal transport. Even here, O'Connell and Moorehouse concentrate upon the motorcar, whilst Koerner devotes much of his research into the industry. All of these writers have been useful as a means by which comparisons can be made. This study of interwar motorcycling aims to add to scholarly knowledge and broaden our understanding of the culture of interwar motoring during that period.

Chapter 1: Origins of the movement.¹ A socio-economic overview of motorcycling up to and including the interwar period.

Motorcycling is an often-overlooked subject for discussion by historians of interwar Britain, yet the machine and its enthusiasts were a part, albeit a small one, of the social and cultural life of this period. This chapter will trace the development of the motorcycle as a form of transport from its early origins to the interwar period, beginning with an overview of pioneering efforts to create a practical machine and continuing by showing how it eventually became a utilitarian means of private transport. An overview of the circumstances important in the development of the British motorcycle industry follows. The importance of the First World War in technological improvements and the consequent gains in popularity and familiarity with the technology is then followed by a run-down of the range and diversity of use of the machine, as well as its economic advantages over the horse. A snapshot of relative numbers of vehicles registered at Durham leads to an analysis of the motorcycle's relative decline in numbers compared with the motorcar. Differences in manufacturing techniques with its four-wheeled rival are analysed leading into a discussion of the importance of the motorcycle industry to the economy of both the Midlands and the rest of the country. The value the industry placed upon positive propaganda and public relations is noted as are an increased perceived need for the motorcycle to be promoted as a viable utilitarian form catering for 'Everyman.' The setting up of motoring organisations to provide assistance leads on to a discussion of the various setbacks undergone by these early riders. The Auto Cycle Union [ACU] and

¹ From its inception, *The Motor Cycle* one of the main weekly journals for motorcycling, being founded in 1903, claimed on its front cover that it, 'Covers every phase of the movement and circulates throughout the world.' This emphasis on being a movement, rather than just a form of transport shows that it was a magazine for those whose enthusiasm was deeply ingrained. Dyed in the wool enthusiasm for motorcycling has its origins in the pioneer readers and writers of this magazine. Such enthusiasts still exist, despite motorcycling being seen today as being a leisure pursuit due to the dominance of the motorcar.

industry's efforts to promote motorcycling for the masses as well as comply with governmental legislation are then analysed. The advantages of motorcycle use in times of economic depression as discussed by the relevant press are then noted. There then follows comparisons between the American and British markets, postulating reasons why the former were dominated by the motorcar. Increased rivalry by continental manufacturers combined with increased motorcar use will then be discussed.

The origins of motorcycling can be directly traced to two sources, both of which existed in Victorian times. Firstly, the sport of cycling, which was extremely popular from the late Victorian period onwards, instilling within certain members of the population the idea of exploring the countryside, either singly or in the profusion of clubs, which emerged at the time.² These clubs inspired both sporting and socialising desires in their members, both of which were transferred to the motorcycle clubs, which came into existence almost as soon as this form of motorised transport achieved a practical form.³ The second factor essential for the creation of the motorcycle was the engine. The Victorian age was the steam age. Locomotive power swept over the nation, the empire, and the world. Although well suited to tracked vehicles, and having been used on road vehicles with varying degrees of success, steam engines had several disadvantages. They were inherently heavy, of low power to weight ratio, needed time to get up steam, and needed a ready supply of coal. Exemplifying effort exerted in developments in this field, Michaux-Perreaux, a French producer, made a steam powered velocipede, at the rate of several hundred a year from 1868 to 1871.⁴ A lighter more practical form of engine, and one more readily suited to fitting into a bicycle frame, was the petrol engine. Although

² See Rubenstein, D. 'Cycling in the 1890s' in *Victorian Studies*. 21, 1 (1977) pp. 47 – 71.

³ The oldest British club for motorcyclists, is The Motor Cycling Club, formed in 1902. Curiously, it accepted four wheeled vehicles owners into its ranks from the outset.

⁴ Tragatsch, E. (ed.), *The New Illustrated Encyclopedia of Motorcycles* (London: Greenwich Editions, 2000). p.357.

most notably Edward Butler of Erith, who in 1884 patented a three-wheeled machine powered by a two-stroke engine, did some work in this area in England, it was on the Continent that the main development occurred during the latter part of the nineteenth century.⁵

Perhaps the most famous of the pioneer engineers and the one generally given credit as being the first to create a practical motorcycle, was the German, Gottlieb Daimler. Using an engine which worked under the four stroke principle patented in 1876 by Dr. Nicolaus Otto and Eugen Langen, and using a hitherto cleaning fluid, petrol, as a fuel, Daimler's *Einspur*, (single track, although it employed two outrigger wheels), machine first emerged from his Bad Canstatt workshop in 1885, around the same time that Karl Benz built a three wheeled car at Mannheim.⁶ These machines tended to be of singular design, and were laboriously produced in workshops more akin to blacksmiths shops than those of engineers. The machine credited with being the first built in any number, was again of German manufacture, made by Hildebrande & Wolfmuller in Munich. First patented in January 1894 its engine was of a massive 1489cc. Why did the development of such machines take place on the Continent to a greater extent than in Britain? This is because English law was restrictive and backward looking during this time concerning motor vehicles, all of which were supposed to be preceded by a man with a red flag. Roads were given over in most cases to horse powered transport and any form of motorised transport was frowned upon by a Parliament which was a '...council of horsemen.'⁷ It was not until the piece of legislation familiarly known as the Emancipation Act of 1896⁸, which freed up some of the restrictions and raised the speed limit from 4 to the still insufficient 12

⁵ Ayton, C. Holliday, B. Posthumus, C. & Winfield, M., *The History of Motorcycling*. (London: Orbis Publishing, 1979). p.11.

⁶ Ayton, C. et al, *The History...* p.7.

⁷ *Exon of The Motor Cycle, Motor Cycle Cavalcade*. (London: Illiffe & Sons, 1950). p.16.

⁸ *The Locomotives on Highways Act*. 59 & 60 Vic., c.XXIX.

mph that motoring had any chance of becoming popular in England, despite the law-makers being those most able to afford such forms of transport. Most machines and engines had to be imported from the Continent, usually France or Germany, and it is from the latter country that the generic term motorcycle emerged, (*motorrad* or *motorzweirad*).⁹

After a rather hesitant start, the British motorcycle industry developed mainly in the Midlands, a part of the country already devoted to engineering and the production of bicycles. In Wolverhampton for instance, the town's Red Book directory of companies for 1887 lists 48 devoted to the production of bicycles.¹⁰ Britain was already the world's main producer of this form of transport, companies such as BSA and Raleigh being perhaps the most famous. Raleigh began putting continentally produced engines into its own bicycle frames in 1899, whilst BSA was relatively late, doing the same thing in 1906 before producing their own engines.¹¹ Coventry was a favourable location for the development of motorcycle engines having already established industries such as watch making, and the Coventry Chain Company as well as being the centre for the United Kingdom's bicycle industry.¹² Evidence exists which proves the link between cycles and motorcycles in other parts of the country. George R. Brown Ltd of Gateshead, a cycle and gramophone dealer, keen cyclist and member of the Tynevale Cycling Club, set up business in 1902, continuing up until the Second World War. The firm's order book reveals seven makes of bicycle manufactured by companies, which also produced

⁹ Ayton C. et al, *The History...* p.15.

¹⁰ Neeld, P., 'Wolverhampton Motorcycles: The Growth & Decline of an Industry,' in *Transport History*, 9 (1978). p.52.

¹¹ Tragatsch, E., *The New Illustrated Encyclopaedia...* p. 162; 437.

¹² Lancaster, B. & Mason, T., *Life and Labour in a 20th Century City: The Experience of Coventry*. (Coventry: Cryfield Press, 1986). p.14. Watch making involved the production of gears and their timing. This knowledge was needed for gearboxes and in the setting up of accurate methods of valve timing.

motorcycles.¹³ The order book also contains reference to the sale in 1926, of one Raleigh motorcycle, which suggests that the firm may have been willing to repair them. This is further emphasised by a visit in 1923 by the members of the Gateshead Motor Club:

Fig. 1.1. *Gateshead Motor Club 1923.*



Source: Tyne & Wear Archives Service. DX955/6/12.

Another ideal circumstance for a firm to set forth in the production of motorcycles at this time was to be involved in the production of armaments. Some of the same forms of technical expertise were required in making a gun as in producing an engine, such as the ability to accurately bore cylinders and knowledge of the properties of metals. Several notable firms, such as Royal Enfield, based at Reddich in Worcestershire, Birmingham Small Arms [BSA] and in Liege, Belgium, the Fabrique Nationale des Armes de Guerre, [FN] did this.¹⁴

¹³ Tyne and Wear Archives Service, TWAS DX955/6/12. These included, Raleigh, Rudge, Hercules, Vindec, Sheffield Dunelt, and Royal Enfield.

¹⁴ Ayton, C., *The History...* p.37.

During the first part of the twentieth century, up until the First World War, motorcycling was mainly a pursuit of the relatively well off. This was due to a number of factors, such as their primitive nature, which made them unreliable, and their rarity. *Ixion*, the pseudonym of Canon Basil H. Davis, who wrote a regular article in *The Motor Cycle* for fifty years and rode motorcycles from the turn of the century onwards, summed up these pioneers perfectly:

‘Some of us were engineers... Others gambled on its commercial possibilities. Others again were adventurers, pure and simple. When there is no war on, no filibustering in South America, no uncharted islands to explore, this land of policemen and accurate maps and black coats on Sundays is apt to bore a certain type of temperament. The purchase of a motorcycle imported a spice of risk and uncertainty and Bohemianism into such a life.’¹⁵

Price and the availability of spare parts was also a restricting factor. Technical components such as spark plugs, batteries and often engines had to be imported from the continental countries such as Belgium, France or Germany, and during this period machines tended to be hand built, as Fordist techniques of mass production had not yet been imported.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the seeds of motorcycling had been planted and were destined to grow. By 1905 there were approximately 28,000 machines registered in the British Isles, in 1910 this had grown to over 86,000, and by 1913 this had risen to 180,000.¹⁷

The First World War created the imperative for technological advancement in many areas of industry, including that of motorcycles. These were used extensively in active service,

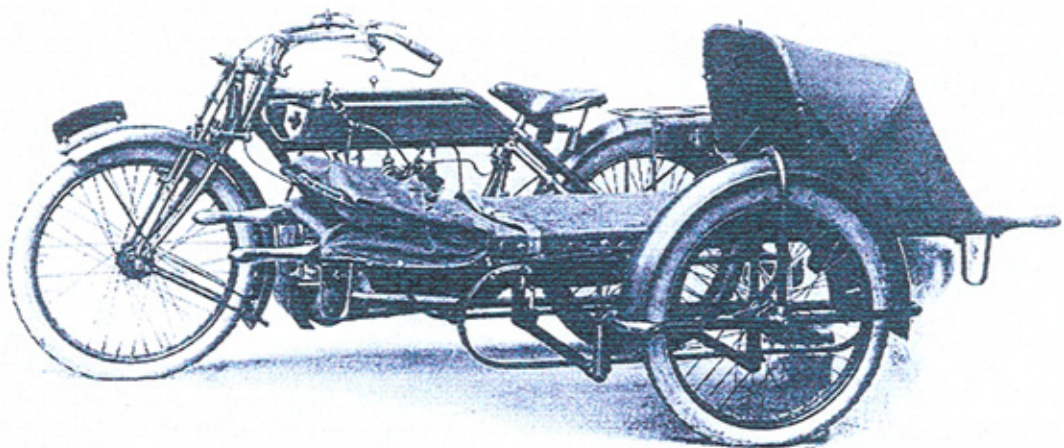
¹⁵ *Ixion of The Motor Cycle, Reminiscences of Motorcycling*. (London: Illiffe & Sons, 1973). p.13.

¹⁶ O’Connell, S., *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896 – 1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998) p.15 Henry Ford set up his first car factory in Trafford Park in 1911, but mass production tended to be shunned in both the car and motorcycle industries for a long time after that.

¹⁷ *Ixion of The Motor Cycle, Motor Cycle Cavalcade*, p.10.

mostly in the role of the transportation of despatches.¹⁸ A reliable mount was essential if the message was to be received successfully and the rider was to survive. Marques such as Triumph, Douglas, and Norton came to the fore during the conflict, and developed beneficially in technological terms at this time. Survivors of these types of motorcycle were often in regular use for many years after the conflict was over. Motorcycles were also adapted as mounts for machine guns, and ambulances at this time. An example of a more humanitarian use for motorcycles is the Sunbeam V-twin engined machine supplied to the Red Cross during the First World War.

Fig. 1.2. *Red Cross sidecar ambulance.*



Source: Brazendale, G., *The Sidecar: A History*. (London: Geoff Brazendale, 1999). p.49.

The above represents a means by which the motorcycle allowed the human tragedies that were inherent in warfare, to be transported safely from the theatre of war. In effect, allowing the mechanism of conflict to function more efficiently. Motorcycles were also

¹⁸ For a poignant and realistic account of First World War despatch riding see, Watson, W. H. L., *Adventures of a Motorcycle Despatch Rider During the First World War* (1915; Liskeard, Cornwall: Diggory Press, 2006).

used by the military as a means by which messages could be carried quickly and reliably via the dispatch rider.

The post war period, which heralded the decade known as the 'Roaring Twenties' found Britain a nation, which had had an entire generation decimated. British society entered the twenties scarred by the ravages of a war, which had left 745,000 Britons killed and 1.6 million wounded.¹⁹ Social differences had become less readily definable and social deference between the classes less essential. The trenches had been a melting pot for class, as bullets ignored status, and trench foot rotted the toes of the high and low. A comradeship was formed which might partially explain its later existence, which was manifested in the social mixing which occurred in organizations such as motorcycle clubs. The war left a shortage of labour, which in its turn raised the wages and lowered the hours of the working class, giving its members more leisure time. Working class wages doubled and working hours fell from 55 to 48 per week.²⁰ Thus, a working man who had before the war only been able to afford a bicycle might now aspire towards motorcycle ownership, though the former was still the more usual form of transport to work, as was walking or taking the tram.

To give some idea of the range of motorcycles in use during this period, data was acquired from records of motorcycle registrations at Darlington in 1920.²¹ A year later, the town had a population of 65,842 inhabitants.²² There were 136 motorcycles first registered in 1920 with owners residing in the Darlington area, comprised of sixty-three different makes of machine. These were further divided into 86 different models, ranging

¹⁹ Marwick, A., *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*. (London: Macmillan, 1975). p.290.

²⁰ Marwick, A., *The Deluge...* p.293.

²¹ Durham County Records Office, Da/cs 2/22 &2/23.

²² According to the census of 1921.

from a 1¼ horsepower Kenilworth Scooter, to a 7 to 9 horsepower Indian.²³ This huge selection of models, were of British manufacture, apart from the American made Indians and Harley Davidson. According to the Motor and Allied Trades Directory, there were at least 27 motor garages, and repairers operating in Darlington at this time, which would suggest that a greater number of motor vehicles were used in the town.²⁴

One such type of vehicle, the motorcycle combination was adapted for use in commercial operations during this period. Small businessmen used them to transport goods and services as an economical alternative to the purchase of a motor van. In an age where it was more common for goods and services to be delivered to the doors of families who aspired in the least part to middle class status, a motorcycle & sidecar could carry much more than a delivery boy on a bicycle, and were less labour intensive than a horse and van. Postal authorities used sidecars for parcel delivery in some areas, and airlines extending this service, used them for express deliveries.²⁵ In some parts of the Midlands, taxi sidecars were operating in this era.²⁶

The summer of 1925 saw a demonstration set up by the industry, of sidecar use, which consisted of a 700 mile tour of the Midlands, visiting Birmingham, Worcester, Gloucester, Colchester, Norwich, Lincoln, Doncaster, Harrogate, Leeds and Halifax.²⁷ During this exercise, the motorcycle combinations were to travel with full loads, to

²³ For complete list, see Appendix 1. Horsepower in this case is not actual power developed but a figure derived for tax purposes. Nominal horsepower was calculated as diameter of cylinder, squared, multiplied by number of cylinders, divided by 2.5.

²⁴ The Motor and Allied Trades Directory. (Norwich: Fletcher & Son, 1925).

²⁵ P.O.V.C. *GPO Vehicles, A Concise Guide: 1906 – 1946*. (POVC: Post Office Vehicles Club, 1981). The Post Office Vehicle Club compiled a comprehensive list of such vehicles, which shows that for the majority of the first half of the 20th century, motorcycles were the most prolifically used vehicle in their service, being utilised for deliveries, and by their engineers for telegraph maintenance. See clubs chapter for reference to the Post Office Engineers club.

²⁶ *The Motorcyclist Review*, Sept. 1925 p.57.

²⁷ *The Motorcyclist Review*, Sept. 1925 p.57.

impress tradesmen with their capabilities. It was claimed that a sidecar outfit's running expenses varied between 2d and 3d per mile and that they could carry a load of between 1¼ and 10cwt depending upon size of engine and type of sidecar. The latter came in three main types. Firstly, the 'air mail' type of body, which was fully enclosed and of a shape similar to a van. This was recommended for, 'light, bulky loads, such as bread and drapery.' Next, the ordinary box type of body, with or without a lid, as used by, 'grocers and vendors of newspapers.' The final type of sidecar was of much sturdier construction. Known as the truck type, it was able to carry livestock, and also appealed to builders and other tradesmen.²⁸ Dunelt, the machine from the firm of Dunford and Elliott of Sheffield, are of particular interest here, as they specialised in sidecar machines for unusual applications such as ice-cream vendors, and fire engines. This company supplied sidecar machines to firms such as MacFisheries, W. & T. Avery Ltd. The Sketchley Dye Works, and *The Times* Book Club.²⁹

Fig. 1.3. *Dunelt sidecar fire-engine.*



Source: *Engineering*, May 23rd 1924, p.645.

²⁸ *The Motorcyclist Review*, Sept. 1925 p. 58.

²⁹ *The Motorcyclist Review*, Sept. 1925 p. 57.

The one example of fire service motorcycles with the equipment fitted that allowed them to be used as tenders, appears to have been a novelty. Motorcycles were also used by fire services for dispatch duties.³⁰

In his comprehensive study of social history, Ross McKibbin addressed the issue regarding the adoption of motorized commercial transport and the consequential involvement with such technology by the working classes. In *Classes and Cultures: England, 1918 – 1951*, he notes the decline of horse-drawn vehicle drivers from 404,000 in 1911 to 15,000 in 1951.³¹ The motorcycle industry was keen to promote such changes in the national infrastructure, both with the enthusiast press's published comparisons of horse-drawn and motorcycle equipped commercial transport, which were understandably favourable towards the latter and the industry's adaptation of sidecars for a range of uses as diverse as bread delivery and utility vehicles for artisans.³² The July 1926 edition of *The Motorcyclist Review* compared the use of a sidecar outfit with that of a horse and van. For goods weighing up to 10cwt, a horse would have to be purchased to the value of between £40 and £45, with a van costing around £75. Riding tack such as a bridle would be £10. The useful working life of a horse, if used every day, was said to be seven years. The annual costs were laid out as follows:

³⁰ Brazendale, G., *The Sidecar: A History*, (London: Geoff Brazendale, 1999). p.65.

³¹ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures: England, 1918 – 1951*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). p.109.

³² This can be compared with findings made by Peter Thorold in his work on motoring. A writer in 1902 voiced similar opinions regarding the early motorcar's stamina compared to horse drawn vehicles, in this case privately owned. See Thorold, P., *The Motoring Age: The Automobile and Britain, 1896 – 1939*. (London: Profile Books, 2003). p.54.

Table 1.1. *Stable running costs.*

Rent and rates of stable:	£13
Wages of driver:	£140
Food:	£50
Repairs & maintenance of van	£4
Vets fees, insurance & shoeing	£13
Bedding, horse rug, etc.	£5
Interest on capital @ 6%	£9
Depreciation	£19
Total:	£253

Source: *The Motorcyclist Review*, July 1926. p. 415.

The above figures did not include the cost of a relief horse if the original was sick. It was claimed to be unadvisable to take such an animal more than around 90 miles per week, which, it was calculated, made the use of a horse and van cost 1 shilling and 1d per mile.

The cost of a sidecar per year, assuming an annual mileage of 6000 was as follows:

Table 1.2. *Sidecar running costs.*

81 gallons of petrol:	£6-1-6
7 ½ gallons of oil:	£1-17-6
2 plugs @ 5s:	10s
Minor repairs:	£1-5-0
Tubes & tyres:	£2-15-6
Tax:	£1
Insurance:	£2-11-0
Total:	£16-0-6

Source: *Motor Cycling*, May 28th 1924.

If the operatives wages of £140 and ‘rent and rates of stable’ at £13 are added to this figure, the sum of £169 and sixpence compared favourably with the cost of the former. A good sidecar outfit could be purchased for between £110 for a moderately powerful 4hp Douglas to £140 for an 8hp Matchless.³³ These prices were for machines put together at the factory. A cheaper method of obtaining a sidecar designed specifically for the tradesman’s requirements would be to purchase a solo machine, priced at approximately £80 and add the required sidecar for between £18 and £22.³⁴ The use of a motorcycle and sidecar for business use increased the range a tradesman could operate. As a result of this, the business could expand, and the customer was given a greater choice of goods and services, which itself caused less reliable firms to go out of business. This is an example

³³ *The Motor Cycle*, Mar 8th 1923 p.40.

³⁴ *The Motor Cycle*, Mar 8th 1923 p. xlvii.

of the beneficial effect motorcycle use would achieve within society. Also, the operative did not have to go through the rituals associated with horse ownership, such as feeding, grooming, and cleaning stables. It was claimed that by using motorcycles, '...double the deliveries could be made in half the time.'³⁵ In this way, motorcycles represent a speeding up of economic processes.

Rail transport was another vital element of these processes. Evidence of motorcycle use as part of the railways is scarce. A visit to the National Railway Museum archives at York revealed, through the journals of the Big Four companies,³⁶ an initial form of intense rivalry between road and rail transport, being overcome by the gradual acceptance of motor vehicles in order to continue to operate efficiently. The Great Western Railway Company's magazine noted, '...the intense rivalry or rather the one-sided guerrilla warfare between road and rail transport.'³⁷ The same company acknowledged the need for road vehicles due to, 'an inadequacy of the sighting of railway stations and goods depots resulting in the need for feeder services.'³⁸ The London, Midland and Scottish Railway magazine, held there to be, '...no doubt that the road motor vehicle forms a valuable supplementary medium for the transport of goods and traffic.'³⁹ A replacement for the horse and cart was required, resulting in novel devices such as the Karrier Cob mechanical horse.⁴⁰ These mechanical horses represent one step up the scale from a sidecar outfit, which in the best of circumstances could not carry as much freight as a horse and cart, due to size limitations. By 1934, the motorization of cartage fleets was

³⁵ *The Motorcyclist Review* Jul 1926 p. 415.

³⁶ The Great Western Railway, London and North Eastern Railway, London, Midland and Scottish, and Southern Railways are generally referred to as the Big Four.

³⁷ *Great Western Railway Magazine*, Nov 1926, p. 373.

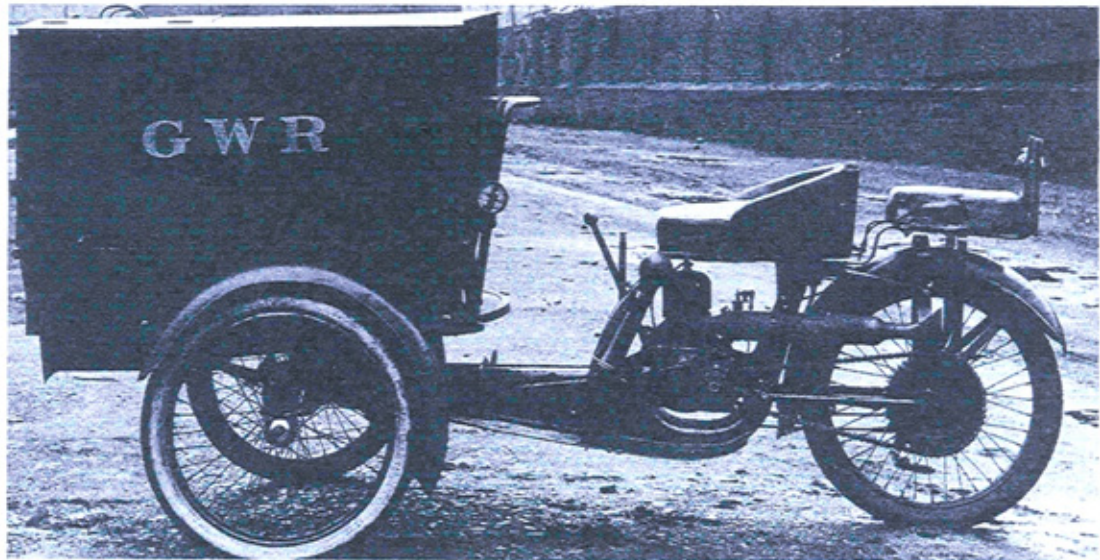
³⁸ Geary, L., *Railway Road Vehicles*. (Romford: Ian Henry, 1981). p.1.

³⁹ *London, Midland and Scottish Railway Magazine*, Sep 1929, p.307.

⁴⁰ *Ibid* p.52. Page 59 of the same book shows these changes. In 1929, the Big Four companies used 3939 motor vehicles and 31,988 horses. By 1937 10,367 motor vehicles and 24,823 horses were employed. The data does not reveal how many motor vehicles were motorcycles.

considered to be 'progress', by the GWR.⁴¹ In 1936, The company's road transport department reported the purchase of, 'A light type of vehicle for parcels work constructed on simple lines with a two-stroke low speed engine, hopefully of low maintenance.'⁴² It is likely that this vehicle was designed on motorcycle lines. This was not the first use of such vehicles. During June 1926, the GWR introduced a number of 'Carette' motor tricycle carriers to be used for urgent perishable consignments, thereby saving the use of more expensive units.

Fig. 1.4. *Great Western Railway's 'Carette,' light parcel carrier.*



Source: Kelly, P. K., *Great Western Road Vehicles Appendix*. (Oxford: Oxford Publishing Co., 1982). plate 208.

This gradual adoption of motor vehicles by the railway companies, not only complies with the requirements of functional efficiency, but also fulfils the criteria of modernization. Although British railway companies appear to have been reluctant to use motorcycles to the fullest extent possible, due mainly to an inherent dislike of motor vehicles taking over what was perceived to be their dominant position as prime-movers,

⁴¹ *GWR Magazine*, Sep 1934 p.398.

⁴² *GWR Magazine*, Jan 1936 p.19.

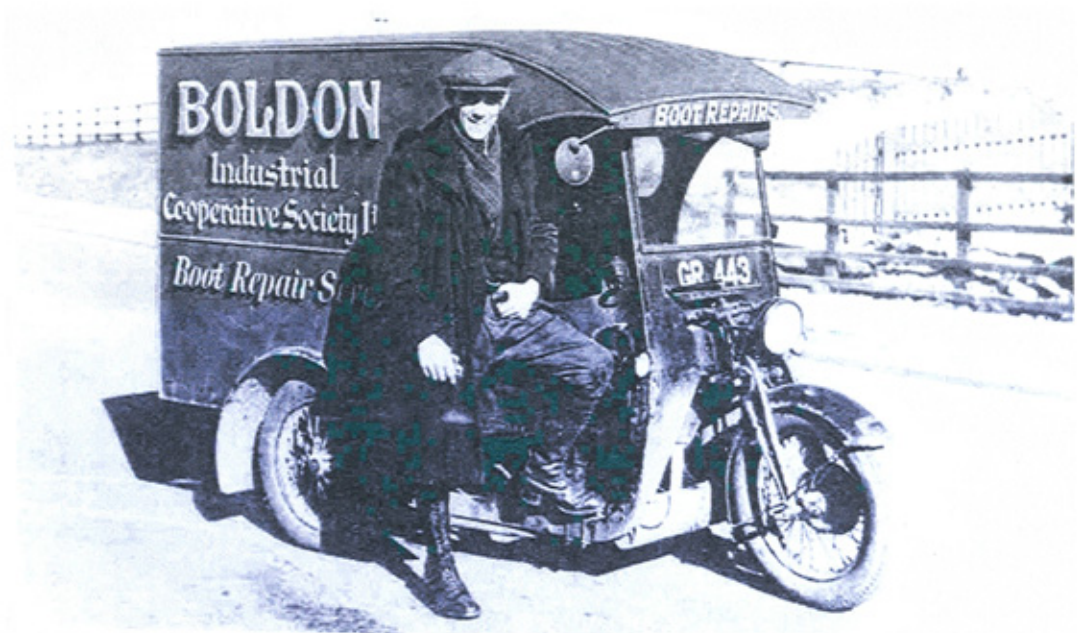
this was not the case in other parts of the British Empire. In for example Australia and India, the motorcycle functioned as a dominant form of transport, being in the case of railways, adapted for use as ganger's tricycles, or as the motive power for railway trolleys.⁴³ Motorcycles were used in the far reaches of the Empire for a variety of tasks. Their versatility, cheapness and simplicity when compared to other forms of motorized vehicle were deciding factors in this. Easy to dismantle, transport, assemble, and repair, these vehicles scored highly in terms of functionality in these areas.

Motorcycle producers were keen to provide a means by which industry and commerce could use the technology in a variety of ways. Watsonian sidecars of Birmingham for instance, produced a machine designed as a milkfloat, which retailed at £19. They also produced a contraption, which could transport another motorcycle within it, for sale at £22. This might have been of use to specialists in recovering vehicles. These two innovative designs further illustrate the diversity of use to which this versatile form of transport was put. Noxal sidecars of Wood Green, London, used patriotism to sell machines, embracing the spirit of the time in their 1937 catalogue, which was produced shortly after King George VI's accession to the throne. Purchasers could own sidecars with the names, '*Imperial Twin*, *Royal Windsor*, *Imperial Launch*, and *Coronation*.'⁴⁴ Motorcycle derivatives were in use by other major companies during the 1930s. Boldon Cooperative Society used a sort of three wheeled motorcycle combination van for a travelling boot repair service:

⁴³ *Motor Cycling* Feb 5th 1918 p.244. In Australia the Smith Auto Wheel was attached to a ganger's tricycle, whilst later in India, a complete Henderson machine was used attached to a trolley, to run on rails, *Motor Cycling* Jan 7th 1925 p.345.

⁴⁴ Beamish Museum Archives, Box W6.33.

Fig. 1.5. *Boldon Co-op mobile boot repairs.*



Source: Beamish Museum Archive. Shic No. 4.872.67.

In the years following the First World War, the survivors of the conflict often needed to indulge in fresh, exciting, pursuits. This might be seen as a natural means of attempting to overcome memories of the suffering.⁴⁵ The nineteen twenties became a good time to be alive, if you were fit, young, and had enough money to indulge in hedonistic pursuits. Having been made much more reliable by the technical developments in the fields of for example metallurgy or electronics, which had been necessary during the war, the purchase of a motorcycle was an ideal means by which a person could explore the countryside, socialise with like minded individuals, take the girl or boyfriend away from parental restrictions, or indulge in competitive events. It epitomised positive aspects of the spirit of the decade, the 'Roaring Twenties' and for the first few years, the motorcycle outnumbered its more expensive and less socially liberal rival, the motorcar.

⁴⁵ Mowat, C. L., *Britain Between the Wars, 1918 – 1940*. (London: Methuen & Co, 1959). p.211.

During this time the motorcycle became accepted as being an important means of personal transport in all levels of society including the working classes. In 1926 during a time of class conflict which culminated in the General Strike, a writer in the *New Statesman*, claimed that motorcycle ownership was an aid to smoothing over class differences as well as giving the working classes a leisure pursuit which could compensate for harsh working conditions:

‘There will be no need to prate of a new spirit of industry when wages permit the workers to escape from an industrial environment for a few hours every weekend, and a week or more every summer.’⁴⁶

A writer for the *Daily Mail* in the same year also advocated the motorcycle as a means of giving the working class a pastime, which would provide a safety valve to discontent:

‘Give a man a motor cycle to ride and to tend and mend in his spare time and you take from him one of the chief causes of disgruntlement.’⁴⁷

For the first few years of the nineteen twenties, motorcycle ownership exceeded that of the car. Between 1920 and 1924 there were 288,000 motorcycles to 187,000 cars registered in 1920 and by 1924 car registrations were catching up but not exceeding those of motorcycles with 474,000 to 496,000 registered respectfully. By 1930 car use had increased over motorcycle use, there being 1.56 million cars on the British roads to 724,000 motorcycles. By 1938 towards the end of the period being studied, there were 1.94 million cars and 462,000 motorcycles on the roads.⁴⁸ The reasons for the eventual dominance of the car over the motorcycle are many, and have been investigated by Steve

⁴⁶ *New Statesman* Apr 17th 1926.

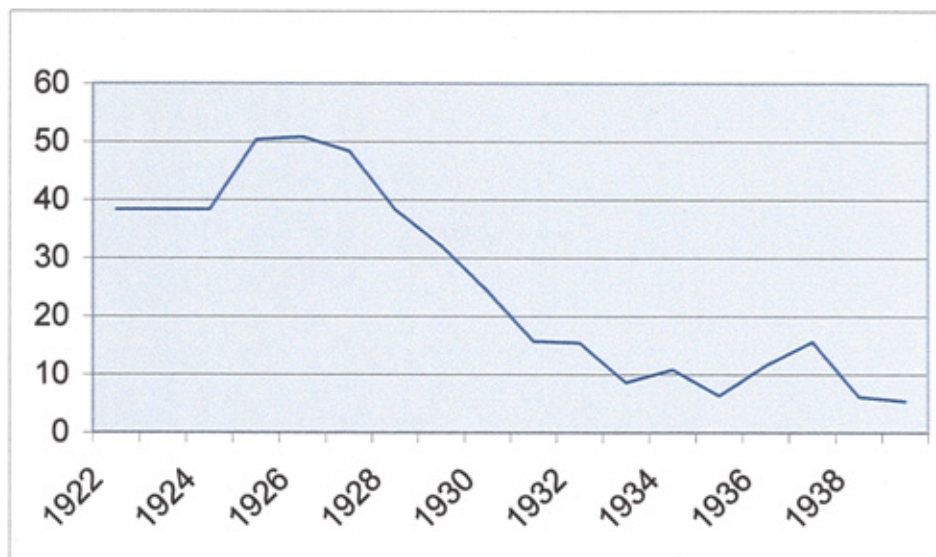
⁴⁷ *Daily Mail* Aug 28th 1926.

⁴⁸ Barker, T. C., ‘Slow Progress, Forty Years of Motoring Research,’ *Journal of Transport History*, 14 (1993). p.159.

Koerner, Sean O'Connell and others.⁴⁹ They will be explored further in a later chapter of this work, with an emphasis upon the spectrum of class ownership.

Some idea of the relative decline in popularity of the motorcycle against the motorcar and other vehicles can be gained through examining data available of motor vehicle registrations through the period. A snapshot of the national picture is given by registrations at Durham, which are available in ledger form at Durham County Records Office.

Table 1.3. *Percentage of vehicles being motorcycles registered at Durham.*



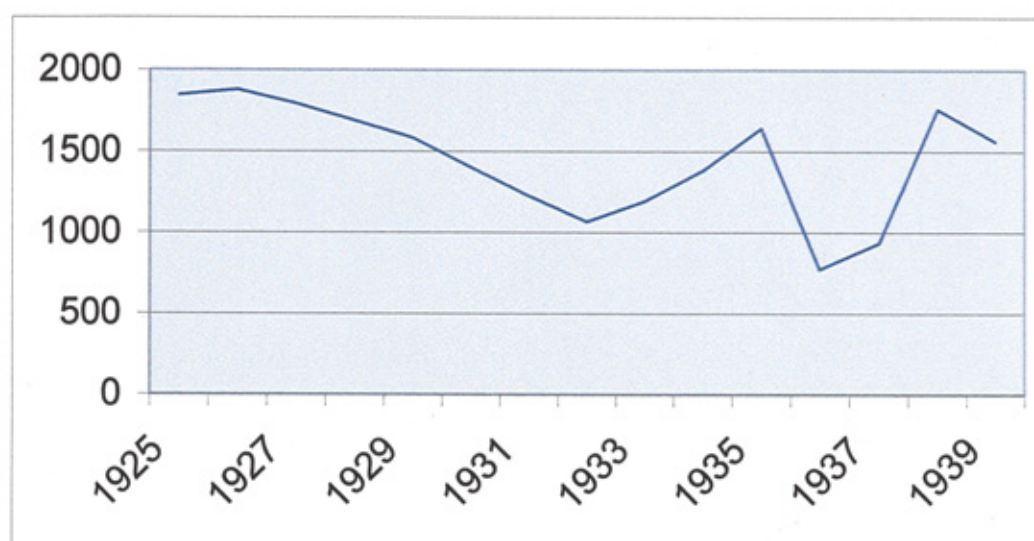
Source: MT/2 to MT/4 Ledgers of Motor Registrations, Durham County Records Office.

The above graph illustrates the great popularity of the motorcycle compared with the motorcar during the 1920s and shows its relative decline in the next decade. Registrations of motorcycles for the Durham area reached a peak of 50.8% of vehicles in 1926, but fell

⁴⁹ See O'Connell, S., *The Car...* and Koerner, S. 'Four Wheels Good, Two Wheels Bad: The Motor Cycle versus the Light Motor Car – 1919–39,' in Thoms, D. Holden, L. & Claydon, T., *The Motor Car & Popular Culture in the 20th Century*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998). p.151-76.

steadily into decline from then on until the war, reaching a low of 5.4% in 1939, as the threat of war became reality. It is not known why there was a slight increase to 15.6% in 1937. This data provides a snapshot from which national trends can be extrapolated. It is illogical that in times of depression with the looming threat of conflict, a nation should opt for a less economical form of transport, although this is partially explained by the number of second-hand cars on the market as is further explored in chapter 5. A graph of the total number of all forms of vehicle registered at Durham during the same period shows a trough in 1936 similar to that suffered by motorcycles, which was followed by a greater increase shortly afterwards. Numbers of registrations also appear to have begun a decline at the start of the war.

Table 1.4. *Total vehicles annually registered at Durham.*



Source: MT/2 to MT/4 Ledgers of Motor Vehicle Registrations, Durham County Records Office.

Although springing from the same source, that of the bicycle industry, the motorcycle and car industries tended to cater for different sorts of people, once the initial pioneering spirit

at the dawn of the motoring movement had declined. Motorcar production began by firms producing small batches of vehicles, which due the economy of scale, tended to keep prices high, and out of the reach of the less well off, who had the option of fitting a sidecar to a motorcycle when the need arose. Fordist mass production techniques were slow to be adopted. A 1912 edition of *The Times* asserted that, 'To put it bluntly, the fact is that there is no firm at present which has been sufficiently enterprising to lay down a large enough plant to make small cars in sufficient numbers to make their production really cheap.'⁵⁰ Car production philosophy changed during the twenties, large-scale production of smaller cars began with the intention of catering to a market, which had previously used motorcycles. Firms such as Austin and Morris with their 'Baby' models directed their design philosophy towards producing a car, which was affordable to motorcyclists. From its first year of production in 1922 the Austin Seven's sales rocketed, averaging 20,000 to 27,000 units a year between 1927 and 1937. Shortly after its introduction it was priced at £225 in 1923, which was only about £25 more than a large 770cc motorcycle combination.⁵¹ This price fell steadily as the process of the economy of scale took effect.⁵² In 1931 the £100 motor car existed in the form of the Morris Minor, the Hillman Minx, and Fords, 8-hp model.⁵³ The transport market was also inundated with cheap second hand cars during this period, which created a further draw away from motorcycles.⁵⁴ Advantages such as simplicity of design, physical size, economy, and manoeuvrability, of the motorcycle, were offset by lack of weather protection, which necessitated the wearing of some form of protective clothing, and lack of carrying

⁵⁰ *The Times*, Aug 20th 1912.

⁵¹ Church, R., *Herbert Austin: The British Motor Car Industry to 1941*. (London: Europa Publications, 1979). p.84.

⁵² Koerner, S. *Four Wheels Good...* p.168.

⁵³ Koerner, S. *Four Wheels Good...* p.155.

⁵⁴ For an in-depth analysis concerning motorcar ownership, see, Bowden, S. M. & Turner, P., 'Some cross-sectional evidence on the determinants of the diffusion of car ownership in the inter-war UK economy.' *Business History*. 35 No. 1 (1993). pp. 55 – 69.

capacity for passengers and luggage. Motorcycles were also dirtier to own than cars, and often, even after the developments made during the war, needed tinkering with to keep them performing well.⁵⁵ This is not to say that car design and engineering was better than that of motorcycles. Part of the motorcycling enthusiasm stemmed from the willingness of owners to maintain their machines, thereby learning how they worked. It was encouraged in the journals, all of which ran regular maintenance features. Motorcar engines on the other hand, are hidden from their drivers and for many of them their workings remained a mystery. This is the basis for one of the rifts between the two types of motorist; that of the motorcyclist being involved more than the former in the intricacies of their machines, which in turn led to the latter's grimy image. This phenomenon was not apparent at the dawn of the movement, as a later chapter will show.⁵⁶

The motorcycle industry was an important provider of jobs throughout the inter-war period, especially in the Midlands and contributed largely to the lives of its workforce. Coventry for instance, had approximately 20 firms producing motorcycles during the 1920s, Triumph being perhaps the most famous.⁵⁷ In 1923, out of a total city workforce of 56,440 almost half, 22,350 were employed making vehicles such as motorcycles, whilst in 1937, the workforce had risen to 101,010, with over a third of them, 37,390, being employed in a similar fashion. Notably, these figures were from a time when motorcycles were in relative, but not actual decline, compared to motorcar use. They refer to insured workers.⁵⁸ Being part of a factory's workforce did not merely mean doing the work and collecting the wages. Often a person's social life revolved around his or her job. Membership of a works social club might involve participation in activities such as

⁵⁵ These factors will be further explored in chapter 5.

⁵⁶ See chapter 2 on Clubs. The first motorcycle club in Britain also catered for motorcars.

⁵⁷ Potter, C. T., 'The Social, Cultural and Economic Importance of the Motorcycle in Britain during the 1920s.' (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Sunderland, 2001).

⁵⁸ Lancaster, B. & Mason, T., (eds.) *Life and Labour...* p.26.

angling, football, rugby, cycling, or other healthy pursuits.⁵⁹ Many British factories also had motor clubs, which held motorcyclists amongst their membership. Notable amongst these was Vickers Armstrong Whitworth in Newcastle and Scott Motorcycles, of Shipley in Yorkshire, who as a means of entertaining its workforce organised the Scott Trial, which still takes place.⁶⁰

Birmingham Small Arms at Small Heath was the main producer of English motorcycles during this period, holding an important position in the economy of the Midlands. Between 1918 and 1924, the period that records exist for the company in the University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre, BSA employed between 6400 and 13,000 people. These are total figures for all BSA companies. In 1924 BSA consisted of the parent company, BSA guns, tools, cycles, (that is to say motorcycles), Daimler, a manufacturer of amongst other vehicles, light armoured cars, Daimler Hire, William Jessop, an engineering company which specialised in canal and railway construction, Saville and company, Burton Griffiths, and British Abrasive Wheel. The company's cycle department, which was involved in motorcycle production, employed over 2000 men and 900 women in 1919. These figures fell in 1921 to 1900 men and 500 women, but rose again in 1924 to a peak for the year of over 3100 men and almost 1200 women, coinciding with a slump and high unemployment in the former year.⁶¹ BSA machines were always popular. Statistics taken from documents held at Durham County Records Office, show that of the motorcycles registered, BSA were consistently highest in frequency. For example, registrations of motorcycles at Durham between 21/11/22 to

⁵⁹ B. Lancaster & Mason, T., (eds) *Life and Labour...* p.268.

⁶⁰ See Clubs database in appendix 3.

⁶¹ University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre, MRC MSS 19a/7/PE/2/31-33.

24/03/25 show that of the 5000 machines detailed in the ledger, 1917 were motorcycles or sidecar machines, and of these 373 were BSAs.⁶²

The Birmingham Small Arms Company was typical of such firms at the time, in that it was an important element in the economy and society of the Midlands. Its influence was apparent in areas not just concerned with the production of machines such as motorcycles.⁶³ In addition to this, the company was not blind to the importance of promoting sporting competition to increase sales, at least at a local level.⁶⁴ Dirt Track racing or Speedway had reached Britain from New Zealand by 1928. A writer in *Punch* referred to this new sport as possessing, '... a kind of modern, macabre, Stravinskian, Capekian, beauty,' whose machines raced around the track emitting a noise, like, '... ten million mechanical drills performing in unison,' and whose riders, who were given the same adulation as Roman Gladiators, looked more like human robots than people.⁶⁵ In a board meeting in the same year, it was proposed that the company spend £1000 on land at Golden Hillock Road, Birmingham, on a dirt track for motorcycle racing practice.⁶⁶ The board accepted this proposal, and the eventual expenditure was £1769.18.6.⁶⁷

The company was keen to be seen to care for its workforce and gain positive publicity for itself. On the 12th of June 1923 a visit by the then Prince of Wales was organised. Part of

⁶² Potter, C. T. MA thesis, p.81.

⁶³ MRC MSS 19a/2/30/6 For example, the classes of society, which were fortunate enough to be able to live from the dividends from shares in the Midlands, did not overlook BSA in their portfolios. In its annual general meeting in 1924, out of a total present of 472 persons, 278 were shareholders. The majority of these, 188 resided either in Birmingham or its suburbs. A further 51 shareholders in attendance came from the Midlands, with 11 making the journey from London. The rest came from various unspecified locations.

⁶⁴ BSA machines were not successful in TT races. Although they entered the senior TT in 1921, 1927, and 1930, they retired each time before completing the course. Their enormous popularity was based upon reliability, rather than speed. TT Database, <http://www.iomtt.com/>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007)

⁶⁵ *Punch*, or *The London Charivari* Oct 3rd 1928 p.374. The term Stravinskian, refers to the musician. Capekian refers to Karel Capek, the author who popularised the term, 'robot'.

⁶⁶ Solihull Central Library, BSA Directors Minute Book No.8 p.137.

⁶⁷ MRC MSS19a/1/1/16.

the visit involved the presentation by the Prince, of prizes for long –term employees. On this occasion, a Mr. A Ledbrook and Mr. H. Davis, were each to receive a cheque for £50, for having been employed by the firm for fifty years.⁶⁸ In 1937, the company exercised some foresight into future events, by commencing the award of grants to employees who joined the Territorial Army.⁶⁹ In the same year, BSA obeyed the convention of the time, sending a telegram of loyalty to King George VI on the occasion of his succession.⁷⁰

The motorcycle industry was at this time dominated by its controlling body, the British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturers Traders Union, [BCMCMTU] which maintained a strict control over its membership, through the use of bonds, which were agreements in areas such as how to conduct business, advertising, production methods, and employment issues. The BCMCMTU considered the decline in popularity of the motorcycle in relation to the motorcar to be a matter of deep concern. A minute of a meeting held on 18th February 1936, gives some idea of how urgent the problem was considered to be. The directors thought it imperative to boost flagging sales, by means of its products being made more useful to the customer.⁷¹ Mr. Victor Horseman of the Motor Agents Association, Motor Cycle Section made several suggestions for improvements. Ease of starting the machine was considered by him to be of supreme importance. More efficient silencing was very desirable. (This early example of social conscience must be placed alongside the legal side. Motorcycles were often prosecuted for inefficient silencing, as will be seen in another chapter). It was decided that silencing should be made more efficient even to the detriment of top speed and cost. Mr. Horseman considered

⁶⁸ SCL, BSA Minute Book No.7 p.169.

⁶⁹ SCL, BSA Minute Book No.12 p.297.

⁷⁰ SCL, BSA Minute Book No. 12 p.291.

⁷¹ These controllers of industry were a notable characteristic of interwar commerce, and were epitomized by Dudley Docker, who amongst other diverse interests controlled BSA. His career is documented in Davenport-Hines, R. P. T., *Dudley Docker: The Life and Times of a Trade Warrior*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

motorcycle brakes to be on average very satisfactory, but he stressed the importance of design improvements, which made machines less vulnerable in their details in case of impact or fall. Motorcycles also suffered from a surfeit of corners and small projections, which made them difficult to clean, compared to motor cars, which were relatively smooth in comparison. A design change, which was also mentioned, was to place a smaller sectioned front tyre on machines, which would help straight-line stability. Finally, electrical equipment was considered extremely troublesome and unreliable, and the cost of its servicing too high. Coil ignition was a problem and batteries were fragile.⁷² A board meeting of BSA reflects some of the problems, which needed dealing with. In 1935, its members were called to discuss possible remedies to design faults such as big end failure, valve guide wear and clutch problems. The technical jargon used suggests that these problems had been related to the company by dealerships with a well-developed knowledge of engines.⁷³

Companies did not only rely upon dealerships in their quest to perfect their products. One respondent of Barnard Castle's experience of ownership of a new model BSA Blue Star 350 in 1932 shows that the company could be very generous to its customers when they met with problems. After difficulties in engaging gears arose in his new machine, he wrote to the company, enquiring about the cost of a replacement gearbox. Fearing a large bill, he was pleasantly surprised. The company wrote back, asking how the fault had occurred and requested the gearbox be returned to them:

'In about a week, I got a brand new gearbox, free of charge, and they asked me to send the old one back.'⁷⁴

⁷² Warwick University Modern Records Centre, MSS 204/1/1/13 p.2238.

⁷³ MRC MSS 19a/3/7/9.i .

⁷⁴ Respondent 4, born Woodland, County Durham, 1910.

Surprisingly, the company would also show generosity when other less mechanical problems arose. When someone stole the machine's toolkit, the same respondent again entered into correspondence with BSA:

'I wrote to BSA asking the price of a toolkit, saying I would send the money on, and instead, they sent me a toolkit back, again free of charge.'⁷⁵

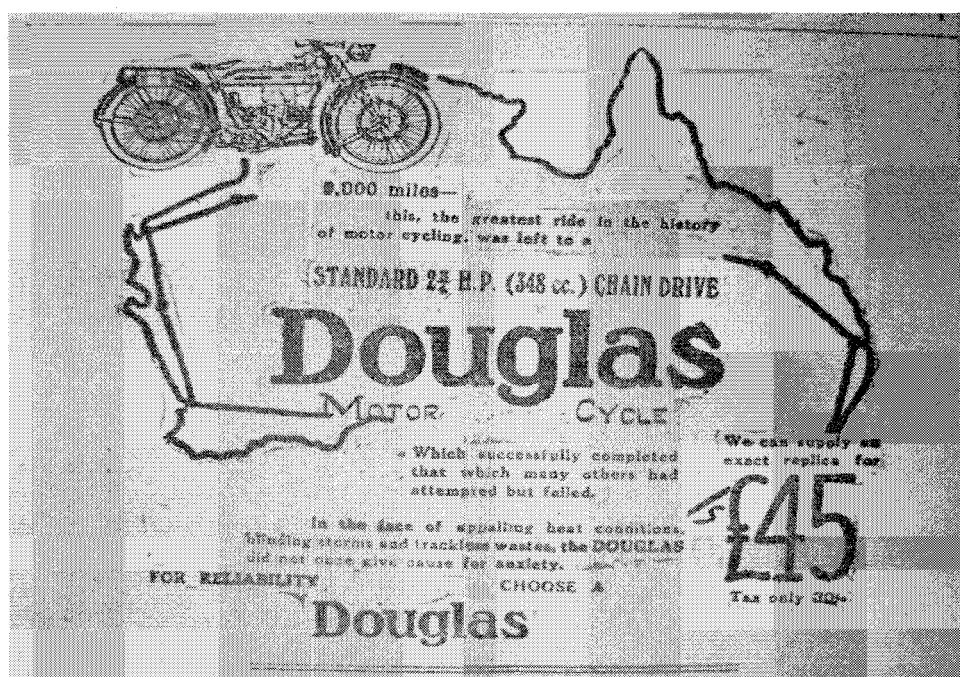
These examples show that at this time, even the largest producer of motorcycles was able to deal on a personal level with its customers, although in the first instance, it would have been beneficial to both parties, as finding and solving gearbox problems, would aid in product development. This is also an example of the sophistication of the goods transportation system in operation at the time.

Another firm, Douglas, which was based at Bristol, went to extraordinary lengths to prove the reliability of their models. This was hardly necessary, as their horizontally opposed twin cylinder machines had proved a capable wartime mount for dispatch riders. A newspaper advertisement showed the Douglas as being suited to the intrepid explorer, a 9000-mile tour of Australia being achieved in the early thirties by A. W. Grady.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Respondent 4, born Woodland, County Durham, 1910.

⁷⁶ This trip was serialised in *The Motor Cycle* May 28th 1925 to Jun 11th 1925.

Fig. 1.6 *Round Australia by Douglas.*



Source: *The Chester-Le-Street Chronicle*, August 5th 1932.

Some idea of the popularity of motorcycles can be gained by the fact that in a relatively small town such as Chester-Le-Street, at least three businesses were selling them. W.D. Roberts of Bridge End Road for example, showed a willingness to diversify in his advertisements, 'Mangle rollers, general cycle and motorcycle repairs promptly attended to.'⁷⁷ The same newspaper, in 1921 heralded the arrival in the town of its first petrol station, to be run by C. F. Rymer Ltd. The ability to buy petrol in bulk, as opposed to purchasing it in two-gallon cans at chemist shops, was introduced into the country by the Anglo-American Oil Company, distributing under the name of 'Pratts' motor spirit. A nationwide network of stations was an important element in the motorist's increased freedom of movement.⁷⁸ The Cooperative Wholesale Society produced its own range of machines, known as Federation or Federal. Made in Birmingham, from 1919 to 1937 and

⁷⁷ *Chester-le-Street Chronicle* Aug 10th 1923. The other two firms were H. Young and Aunger's Garage. All were later to diversify into motor car sales.

⁷⁸ *Chester-le-Street Chronicle*, Feb 4th 1921.

incorporating mainly small capacity engines. That they were made at all by the company shows how the motorcycle was considered as a viable and acceptable form of transport. The purchase of a motorcycle was considered to be as acceptable as the purchase of a bicycle.

It became necessary to radically change motorcycle design concepts, in order that they become easier to use and maintain by the owner. They should become more reliable, with less maintenance being necessary, and be easier for both the machine to be kept clean, and the rider clean whilst riding. In order that they maintain their popularity, it was considered that motorcycles should have more of the advantages of the car, such as weather protection, and smoother lines with less of the disadvantages, such as less tax to pay and more manoeuvrability. There was a much discussion during this period about finding 'Everyman's Machine.'

The condition of the roads, and the relatively primitive engines, frames and suspensions of motor vehicles meant that reliability remained a problem during this period. The two main organisations formed at the turn of the century, to deal with the problem of breakdowns were the Royal Automobile Club, [RAC] and the Automobile Association, [AA]. The RAC, formed in 1897, was and is an institution whose services included tourist information and hotel discounts, technical advice, and legal assistance. It held the patronage of the monarch and welcomed into its membership all forms of motorist.⁷⁹ The AA originated in 1905 as a result of the introduction of a blanket 20mph speed limit in the *Motor Car Act* of 1903.⁸⁰ This Act left many motorists the prey of numerous police speed traps. The AA set up bicycle patrols on the London to Brighton road, to inform

⁷⁹ *The Autocar Handbook*. (London: Illiffe & Sons, 1920). p.294.

⁸⁰ *The Motor Car Act*. 3 Edw. VII, c. XXXVI.

motorists of their presence. If a patrol member did not salute a passing member, the member was to, '...stop and ask the reason.'⁸¹ In this way, it could be claimed that the organisation was not intending to hinder the police. Both organisations eventually instituted roadside repairs, the AA having by 1930 sidecar outfits designated for this purpose.⁸² In 1926 the RAC began to publish an annual analysis of motorcycle cases dealt with under its 'Get You Home' scheme. Under this service, associate members were supplied with a relief car in the event of a breakdown, provided free of charge to take them to their destination. Between 1926 and 1928, the years for which information is available, the main cause of motorcycle breakdowns was ignition failure, which accounted for between 16 and 17.5% of cases. The next most frequent cause was accidents, which lay between 12.5 and 15.2% of cases. Engine failures were mainly due to cylinder and piston problems at around 10% of cases, whilst gearbox problems accounted for about 9% of cases. Punctures are not listed, but front and rear wheel problems were. These varied between 1.5 and 4% of cases, primarily in the rear wheel, which is logical as it transmits the machine's power.⁸³ The inter-war period motorcyclist was therefore more likely to be found beside a smoking engine, rather than a flat tyre, despite the profusion of horse-nails on the roads. Engine failures overall amounted to 33% compared with 31.5% of car engine problems dealt with by the organisation. Lighting failures appeared to show that there had been improvements, cases for these being between 0.3 and 0.7%. This was a transitional period in lighting when acetylene lighting was being superseded by electric lights powered by dynamos or other charging systems.

⁸¹ *The Automobile Association Handbook*. (London: The Automobile Association, 1930). p.vi.

⁸² There was and is great rivalry between the two organisations. By 1930 the AA claimed to be the largest in the world with over 400,000 members, whilst the RAC emphasised its royal patronage, which led it to appeal to middle class motorists, and its earlier foundation date.

⁸³ *The Motor Cyclist Review*, Aug. 1929, p.70.

Motorcycles in general lacked the weather protection of a car. This was never overcome, but attempts were made to provide as much of it as possible. The early twenties saw a small boom in scooter like machines, but this was short lived. Some makers did their best to shield the rider from the elements and from the machinery with panelling on such machines as the Ascot Pullin of 1928 or the innovative Ner-a-car of earlier in the decade, with its deeply valanced mudguards, which allowed the rider to use it wearing ordinary clothes, and variable gear mechanism. Its low, flat chassis permitted a large, comfortable seat to be fitted, and a low centre of gravity made it, the makers said, 'skidproof.' Several years after the demise of the company, *Ixion* claimed that its machines were still being used daily, '...especially by professional women living in country districts – midwives, village organists, etc.'⁸⁴

The dawn of a new decade saw the Auto Cycle Union issue proposals for a trial to be held some time in 1930, in which motorcycles, designed as utility mounts for the 'man in the street', could be tested and demonstrated to the public. These machines were meant to appeal to a section of the public who would not normally consider a motorcycle as a viable, practical means of transport, as opposed to the motorcycling enthusiast.⁸⁵ The trial was open to any manufacturer, designer, or owner of a solo utility machine, which left the event open to the small operations as well as the industry's giants. In addition to the usual preliminary tests of reliability, efficient braking, and hill climbing ability, a further emphasis was laid upon high standards of weather protection, ease of starting, economy, maintenance, with a final emphasis on comfort. A machine's capabilities were to be judged both by experts, and by members of the general public with no previous experience of motorcycling, so that an unbiased view could be obtained. Another aim of

⁸⁴ *Ixion of The Motor Cycle, Motor Cycle Cavalcade*, p.216.

⁸⁵ *The Motor Cyclist Review*, Sep. 1929 p.130.

the trial was to dispel a popular misconception of the motorcycle as being of interest only to the sporting rider. The utility machine was ideally to appeal to, '...the parson, the retired civil servant, the businessman, and the clerk,' notably all relatively middle class occupations. It was also the aim of the industry to increase the number of female motorcyclists, by making the pursuit less messy and more convenient. The magazine estimated that there were 25,000 women motorcycling on a regular basis, using their own machines at this time.⁸⁶ The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders calculated that there were 732,300 motorcycles in use during this year, which makes women riders 3.4% of the whole.⁸⁷

The Motor Cycle offered cash prizes to the value of £500 to the winners of the trial. The event was to have been of six days duration in accordance with other gruelling events of the time. The trial was to be held under the auspices of the Auto Cycle Union [ACU].⁸⁸ The RAC offered prizes of £25 each for silencing, performance, rider protection and the best performing machine weighing under 100lb, with the overall winner receiving a trophy and £250 prize.⁸⁹ Second place received £150 and third got £50. A special prize for novelty of design was to be awarded by the ACU. It was thought necessary to formulate a completely new set of rules for the event, trials previously being run to best test the sporting elements of the motorcycle. The entry fee was to be ten guineas with a limit of 100 entrants. There were to be 21 tests in the trial covering aspects in addition to reliability, breaking and hill-climbing, protection of rider from mud.⁹⁰ Also, silencing, which brought the motorcyclist into conflict with the general public, was to be tested.

⁸⁶ *The Motor Cyclist Review*, Sep. 1929 p.130.

⁸⁷ *Motor Industry of Great Britain*. (London: Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders, 1964). p.91.

⁸⁸ *The Motor Cycle* Jan 3 1929 p.1.

⁸⁹ *The Motor Cycle* Jun 6th 1929 p.894.

⁹⁰ *Motor Cycling* Jul 3rd 1929 p.275. The rider's overalls were to be weighed to discover the extent of the ingress of this element.

Elements, which would be important to newcomers to the motorcycling scene such as stability, ease of starting and handling, simplicity of control, and external cleanliness were also included. For the touring rider, luggage carrying capacity was important, as was speed, comfort, flexibility, and economy. Maintenance frequency, and ease of addition of oils, etc., how easy the machine was to work on and the quality of tools provided were to be tested. From a safety viewpoint, the machine's vulnerability, appearance, and the efficiency of lighting and warning devices were also included.⁹¹ Marks were to be awarded out of 100 for each test and there were to be four types of official juries. These included official drivers, who were experienced motorcyclists, experts in a particular field, such as breaking, and 'Everyman' officials, who were not motorcyclists but who represented possible future motorcyclists, took their place beside official ACU observers. There was to be a 500 mile demonstration run in which riders were disqualified if they exceeded the blanket national speed limit of 20mph.

Ixion, commenting upon the above regulations, expressed the opinion that they had been formulated to perfection and would test the machines in a more realistic fashion than was the case in standard trials, or races. '...gone forever in this event at least, is that timid failure to grapple with actual fact, which has disfigured every trial.'⁹² By the closing date for entries, August 23rd 1930 only 23 machines had been put forward to compete. In an unprecedented penny pinching action, the ACU decided not to allow the trial to take place, because of a minimum entry of 25 machines. Their reason was that the trial was estimated to cost £700 and their expenses would not be met. The ACU wielded great power in motorcycling at this time, but its unilateral decision came in for great criticism in the press. *The Motor Cycle* stated that a great deal of positive publicity for the pastime

⁹¹ *The Motor Cycle* Jun 6th 1929 p.893.

⁹² *The Motor Cycle* Jul 4th 1929 p.14.

to the general public had been lost by this decision.⁹³ Included in the correspondence was a letter from the pioneer aviator and aircraft designer, Sir Alliot Verdon-Roe, who also produced a Saro motorcycle. He emphasised the positive effect the trial would have had on easing road congestion, if as a result of this publicity, more road users had taken up utility motorcycling.⁹⁴ If it had taken place it is likely that such publicity would have helped to ease the decline in motorcycle use to the expense of the motorcar.

‘*Corrigenda*’ writing in *The Motor Cyclist Review* in 1929 predicted a time when all motorcycles would be utility mounts, and that the sporting mount, with its inherent need for constant tinkering and attention would be replaced by a machine capable of taking its rider anywhere he or she might wish, with the minimum of fuss. The general tone of the article is one of foreboding. This is understandable, in an enthusiast’s periodical, as for many motorcyclists a genuine relationship was formed with their machines, through the physical acts of maintaining and using them. The writer upheld the notion that the two sorts of machine could coexist, and that they both held a viable place in the rider’s stable.⁹⁵

Some of the post 1930 machines were designed as a direct result of this need and also to produce an ultra economical motorcycle, with which to prevent further defection to car ownership by motorcyclists. They also were designed to qualify for a reduced rate of road tax, a result of the 1931 Budget. This made it possible for motorcycles under 152cc to pay 15 shillings road tax per year, instead of the 30 shillings previously paid. It was to take effect from January 1932. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Snowden,

⁹³ *The Motor Cycle* Aug 28th 1930 p.1.

⁹⁴ *The Motor Cycle* Sep 4th 1930 p.362.

⁹⁵ *The Motor Cyclist Review* Sept. 1929 p.129.

claimed in his Budget speech, that this was to encourage the development of a new type of light motorcycle, ‘...which is now being developed on the Continent.’⁹⁶ This continuance of taxation for small motorcycles came as an unexpected blow to the British industry, which had lobbied strongly for the Government to adopt the continental practice of allowing small capacity motorcycles to be tax exempt. The industry hoped that this would have resulted in an increase in registrations, which had again fallen in that year.⁹⁷ Small continental machines were now being produced in sufficient numbers to warrant concern in the British industry, which had neglected this niche in the market, apart from in small two stroke concerns such as Villiers, whose engines powered small economy models, since their debut at the 1913 Olympia Show. Major firms such as BSA and Triumph, which had previously neglected to make small motorcycles, instead concentrating on machines of the more usual categories of 250, 350, 500cc or larger, began production of machines designed to comply with this reduced rate of tax. They tended to be of simple design with few frills, black enamel paint being a substitute for chromium to keep costs down. BSA produced the X34 –0, a 149cc overhead valve engined four stroke, which retailed, (in 1934) for £29-17-06. The Cotton Motor Company of Gloucester had three models in this cubic capacity. A 150cc Villiers engined two stroke, for £26-15-00, a 150cc overhead valve machine for £31-15-00, and a side-valve machine for £29-15-00. Douglas Motor Cycles of Bristol, went against their usual practice of producing horizontally opposed twin cylinder, four stroke machines, with their 148cc two stroke, the X1 for £25. Other companies such as Francis Barnet, James, and Excelsior, which had previously catered for the more economically minded purchaser, made motorcycles of this category for around the £25 mark. Royal Enfield made an incredibly cheap, (at £19-19-00) two stroke, with a pressed steel frame, as well as two

⁹⁶ *The Times*, Apr. 28th 1931.

⁹⁷ Ayton, C. Holliday, B. Posthumus, C., *The History...* p.133.

other models within the cubic capacity range. Triumph produced a Villiers engined two stroke, the XV/1 for £25-10-00 as well as its own four stroke engined XO5/1 for four pounds more.⁹⁸ These machines were commonly known as 'Snowdens'.⁹⁹ An example how the economic situation effected the production of motorcycles and vice-versa, lies in the manufacture in Cleckheaton of 250cc Red Panthers. These were machines that were built down to a price, in order that the firm making them, Phelon and Moore could keep in business. In 1933 unemployed women from the local woollen mills constructed Red Panthers.¹⁰⁰

The depression forced many people to economise. Transport was one area where this was the case, and which provoked comment in *The Times*. W.F. Strickland, writing from the House of Commons, suggested that the hard done by businessman might forsake four wheels for two, as his personal and business transport. Having recently paid a visit to the Cycle and Motor Cycle Show at Olympia, Strickland was amazed by what he observed:

'I saw today motor-cycles which will run up to 150 miles on a gallon of petrol and enable the business man to ride, say five miles to his office or to the station or the golf course and back for a penny or two a day. I saw bigger machines with all sorts of improvements designed to make motor-cycling more comfortable and convenient for the utility rider, and I saw a family motor-cycle and sidecar for just over £50, which, I suggest, provides an opportunity even in these hard times of increasing rather than decreasing the ranks of motorists.'¹⁰¹

Just what make and model of machine the writer was referring to is unstated, but the figure of £50 compares favourably with figures quoted by Steve Koerner.¹⁰² Motorcycles were clearly seen as a stop-gap measure, to be used until more prosperous times, by those

⁹⁸ *Motor Cycling*, Feb.28th 1934, p.572.

⁹⁹ Currie, B., *Great British Motorcycles of the '30s*. (London: Chancellor Press, 2000). p.46.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p.34.

¹⁰¹ *The Times* Dec 5th 1931.

¹⁰² Koerner, S. 'Four wheels good...' p.169.

more used to four wheels, and it is deducible from the previous paragraph that the industry did attempt to provide such utilitarian machines at around the time they were needed. Despite this, and no matter the state of the economy of the country, motorcar use continued to rise, and motorcycle use decrease.¹⁰³

Major H. R. Watling, Director of the British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturers Traders Union, writing in 1929 analysed the developmental trends emerging in the design of motorcycles. He claimed that contemporary machines were remarkable for their economy, reliability, and longevity, and had improved in recent years in areas of component finish, brakes, tyres, seating and shock absorbsion. Pioneer machines had little in the way of suspension; it generally being absent at the rear, seats usually being sprung.¹⁰⁴ During this period, railways dominated Britain's landscape. Whilst acknowledging the train's superiority over the motorcycle in terms of distances covered and time taken on main line journeys, Watling compared motorcycle to train use, and favoured the former for its usability over the train for cross country journeys away from main arterial train routes. Taking as instances journeys of under 100 miles, and keeping to the then national speed limit of 20mph, Watling found that not only did a motorcycle complete a journey noticeably quicker than a train, it did it cheaper. The average best time of six connections between Stoke-on-Trent and Buxton for example was 2hrs and 30 minutes, whilst the worst time by the shortest route could be 3hrs and 29 minutes. The journey by road could be completed in 1 hour and 12 minutes, with the added advantage that the motorcyclist would arrive at his actual destination and not a railway station.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *Motor Industry of Great Britain...* p.91. Between 1931 and 1939 motorcar use rose from 1,083,457 to 2,034,400, whilst motorcycle use decreased from 626,649 to 418,000.

¹⁰⁴ *The Motor Cyclist Review*, Sept. 1929 p.129. It was usual for machines to be equipped with the girder type of front fork, a rudimentary system, during the majority of this period. The telescopic type, pioneered by Matchless, which predominates in modern machines, superseded it.

¹⁰⁵ *The Motor Cyclist Review*, Sept. 1929 p.129.

Watling was obviously preaching to the converted. What the motorcycling movement needed was fresh blood. Non-motorcyclists needed some incentive to take up the pastime if it was to regain the popularity it had enjoyed at the start of the decade. Hence, the encouragement for the development of 'Everyman' machines.

The BCMCMTU understandably, had made it its business to encourage the development of such economy machines, especially as the motorcycle's decrease in relative popularity compared to the car became more evident as the Thirties approached. In 1929 Sir Basil Clarke of Editorial Services Ltd was employed for the purpose of 'motor cycle propaganda.' This early form of 'spin doctoring' consisted of bombarding the press with articles and advertisements of a pro-motorcycling nature. The careful way in which the Union controlled its finances became evident when the use of Clarke's services was withdrawn after a short period.¹⁰⁶ The Union already had an agreed form of advertising policy. Its strategy towards foreign markets was agreed in a meeting at The Towers, Warwick Road, Coventry in 1920. Among its recommendations were those regarding overseas propaganda to boost sales, which were shared with the cycling side of their sphere of influence. It was decided that advertising should start at the beginning of each country's cycling season and should promote the character and utility of the British product. The use of the daily or general press was preferred to a more specialised and less well circulated trade press, although preliminary advertisements should be put in the trade press, to win their co-operation. It was felt that the aim of the advertising was to point out the usefulness of the British machine in sport, commerce, and recreation. It was

¹⁰⁶ University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre. MSS 204/1/1/8.

considered that small numbers of big advertisements were to be preferable to lots of small ones. Finally, good translation was important.¹⁰⁷

These actions were a reaction to a crisis in the overseas market. In Australia and New Zealand, dealers were claiming that sales were falling due to a surfeit of cheap, small, second hand cars such as Austin Sevens. A dealer claimed that another serious threat lay in the second hand American car market.¹⁰⁸ America's influence upon the world's motoring habits has been investigated by David Gartman, who explores the aesthetic developments of the motorcar from a basic utilitarian device, which was accepted as such by the masses and the select few alike, to a point where an emphasis on style to disguise function became important.¹⁰⁹ This change first occurred in expensive vehicles, owned by the rich. The less well off had to be content with less stylish, more utilitarian devices, like the Model T. Ford. Thus, class differences appeared in motoring, and the more stylish machine was to be aspired to, and purchased if and when funds allowed. More aesthetically pleasing vehicles were made, which made people desire more than the basic utilitarian model, to 'keep up with the Jones.' Such aspirations stimulated an increase in car production, which led to a glut of cheap second hand cars in the United States and also to the almost complete destruction of the American motorcycle industry. By 1922 the United States had 11 million cars compared to 210,000 motorcycles.¹¹⁰ This represents a ratio of approximately 52:1. By the end of the nineteen twenties, there were only two firms who produced motorcycles in any number, Indian and Harley Davidson. These two firms produced machines of large engine capacity, which were designed for comfortable, long distance travel across the continent. British motorcycles in the main were not built

¹⁰⁷ MRC MSS 204/1/1/4 p.565.

¹⁰⁸ Koerner, S. *Four Wheels Good...* p.157.

¹⁰⁹ Gartman, D., *Auto Opium: A Social History of American Automobile Design*. (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹¹⁰ Barker, T. C. *Slow Progress...* p.159.

like this, being made better able to cope with shorter distance routes, twisty lanes, or hills, and commuting to work across towns. Harleys and Indians survived because a fierce brand loyalty was instilled in their owners. It is unclear whether the American trait of consumerism, was mirrored in a similar British attitude, and was a major cause of the decline in motorcycle popularity during this period. Americans and Britons differ in their world outlook. It is one aim of this work to analyse the character of the British motorcyclist. Comparing the figures of motorcycle ownership to car in Britain with the United States gives an idea of the comparative popularity of the vehicles. In 1922 in Britain for instance, numbers of both vehicles were nearly the same, with 319,311 cars and 384,360 motorcycles in use.¹¹¹ Even ten years later the figures were 1,127,681 cars to 599,904 motorcycles, a ratio of approximately 2:1.¹¹²

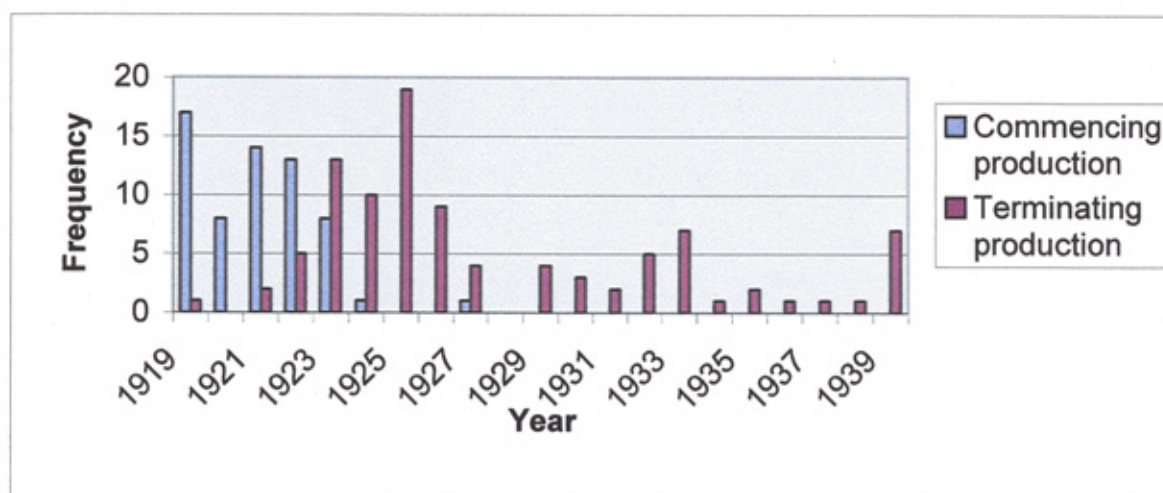
Exports of motorcycles overseas were an important provider of revenue to the country's economy. After the First World War the motorcycles popularity resulted in an increase of firms producing them. At the start of the Twenties, there were approximately 125 firms making motorcycles in Britain, which compares with a figure of 165 makers worldwide.¹¹³ Many of these were short-lived, having jumped on the bandwagon of the popularity of the pursuit. To give some idea of this post-war boom, and subsequent decline, the accompanying graph will give a picture of the number of firms entering and leaving the business:

¹¹¹ Statistical Dept of SMMT Ltd, *Motor Industry...* p.91.

¹¹² Ibid. One possible reason for the increase in motorcar use to the detriment of motorcycle use might have been through the medium of advertising. The Ford Motor Company understood the value of this, as illustrated by an event that took place in 1931. This event can be compared to a similar sidecar event of the 1920s mentioned on page 10. The company undertook a comprehensive tour of the country, and by early 1932 had visited the chief towns of fifteen counties, covering on average 1500 miles a month. When the convoy of vehicles visited Chester-le-Street on January 22nd, the local newspaper noted its favourable reception, especially amongst tradesmen. Also mentioned was the Ford Convoy's hill climbing abilities, a feature emphasised in all forms of motorised road transport at the time, and that each vehicle was equipped with a functional self-starter.

¹¹³ Tragatsch, E., *The World's Motorcycles, 1894 – 1963*. (London: Temple Press, 1964) and *The New Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Motorcycles*. (London: 2000) by the same author.

Table 1.5. *Motorcycle firms, 1919 – 1939.*



Source: Potter, C. T. *The Social & Economic Importance of the Motorcycle in Britain during the 1920s*. MA Thesis, Appendix 1.

According to the figures obtained, which are concerned with a world rather than a nationwide picture, although the majority were British during the period in question, 97 firms commenced motorcycle production, and 62 had ceased to produce machines. The greatest period of commencement was between 1919 and 1922, when 52 firms commenced and 8 ceased. The greatest period of decline came shortly afterwards, between 1923 and 1927, when 10 new firms came into existence, but 55 firms ceased. From this time, until the end of the period, there was a steady falling off of firms of between 1 and 7 per year. In 1939 several more firms ceased production, possibly turning to other war work.¹¹⁴ The obvious post-war boom in companies, illustrates how easy it was to produce motorcycles, from readily available proprietary brands of engine, ancillaries and lighting equipment. Such firms did not possess the necessary technical

¹¹⁴ Henshaw, P., *The Encyclopedia of the Motorcycle*. (Anglesey: Regency House, 2001), p.333. An example of this was the famous family run firm of Rudge, which eventually became the property of HMV. When the Second World War began, the company concentrated on electrical equipment, and no more Rudge motorcycles were made.

know how or engineering expertise to further develop their machines and continue, once the initial demand for any form of powered transport dried up. The post-war boom in producers represents the phenomenon of 'jumping on the bandwagon' in an attempt to profit from the popularity of motorcycling during its peak. How seriously these firms went about producing machines would have been seen by their longevity and production figures. It is possible that some of their machines never got beyond the drawing board stage. Unfortunately, detailed records of the majority of these post-war firms have been lost to history. These expansions exemplify the post-war wishes of trade warriors or 'productioneers' such as Dudley Docker whose many interests included BSA. Docker and those like him hoped that the First World War would be a means by which Germany as well as the United States would be prevented from rivalling Britain's industrial hegemony and through new exporting power, allow for the domination of world engineering.¹¹⁵

Britain was lucky to have a captive market for its produce, manifested in its extensive empire. Motorcycles were a useful mode of transport to places where a car might not be able to go, being more easily manhandled. Their simpler construction also made them easier to repair, which made them useful in remote regions, where extensive engineering workshops might not exist. They were also more economical to run, using less petrol and oil than a car. Yet their continued decline in favour of motorcars was in evidence, not only in the 'White Dominions' of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but even in the remotest regions, as a report from East Africa in 1927 shows, which could also be an early example of upward mobility:

¹¹⁵ Davenport-Hines, R. P. T., *Dudley Docker: The Life and Times of a Trade Warrior*. p.84.

‘In the old days, most chieftains rode Sunbeam bicycles, and the sons rode Raleigh bicycles. Nowadays the Raleigh is common amongst the natives and the chieftains use American cars, whilst the sons ride motor cycles.’¹¹⁶

In a letter to *The Times* in 1931, the then Director of the BCMCMTU, H.R. Watling, illustrated the decline in exports to the self-governing Dominions and India. Their value, he wrote, had amounted to £1,461,073 in 1929, whereas he estimated that the total, by the end of the year, would not exceed £400,000. Watling made a favourable comparison with Germany, a country with its own markets to supply, in the same letter, claiming that the value of their exports of cycles and motorcycles had fallen to under £200,000, and that whilst Britain had lost 36% of her exports, Germany had lost 60%.¹¹⁷ An analysis of the destinations to which British motorcycles were exported showed that in 1932 further falls were in evidence. In Germany and Switzerland, sales of British machines were half that of those in 1931. South African sales had fallen by 20% and those of New Zealand by 30%. In all other export destinations, sales had fallen by approximately 20%; the major exception to this decline lies in Australia, where sales actually rose by 50% during this time.¹¹⁸ Whilst an explanation for this might lie in the world economic slump, another would be the development of each independent nation’s desire to use its own products and see off foreign competition.

During the 1930s, the dominance of the British motorcycle industry in world production and exports was increasingly rivalled by German machines. This was particularly true in the latter part of the decade, when such exports rose from 14,612 in 1936 to 43,000 in 1938. During the same period, Britain exported between 19 and 25 thousand machines,

¹¹⁶ MRC MSS 204/3/1/15 Feb. 1927, ‘Trade in East Africa.’

¹¹⁷ *The Times*, Nov 30, 1931.

¹¹⁸ *Engineering*, Feb 10th 1933 p.151.

thesis on the engineering problems connected with motorcycling. The work was to be associated with the University of Birmingham.¹²³

In another example of contemporary national pride, *Engineering* claimed that the motorcycle industry was one of the best examples of British enterprise, manufacturing, ‘...a British product of unbeaten quality and competitive price.’¹²⁴ The motorcycle industry’s commercial organisation was at this time sound and enterprising and the price of its products placed them within easy reach of all nations with reasonable standards of living. This took place despite there being a less than favourable economic environment exemplified by the serious condition of the world economy at the start of the 1930s.¹²⁵ It is therefore necessary to divide the era into two sections, which approximately coincide with the 1920s where the industry was at a peak in terms of relative use of motorcycles as means of transport and the 1930s where the industry suffered due to increased car usage.

The Wall Street Crash of 1929 heralded the end of the ‘Roaring Twenties’ and saw the dawn of a new age of austerity, which culminated in the outbreak of the Second World War. There was a definite change in the social and cultural ethos of Britain at this time. The heady euphoria, which had manifested itself amongst certain sections of society during the Twenties, had been mollified by the General Strike of 1926 and by the aforementioned financial crisis in America, which affected the rest of the world. The British motorcycle industry was as badly hit as many others during this time, and many firms ceased trading, as has been seen on the relevant graph. Yet motorcycling maintained popularity, both as a means of economical transport, and an entertaining

¹²³ *The Engineer*, Jun 4th 1937 p. 649.

¹²⁴ *Engineering*, Feb 10th 1933 p.151.

¹²⁵ Stevenson, J. & Cook, C., *The Slump: Society and Politics During the Depression*. (London: Quartet Books, 1977). p.2

release from drudgery, through the means of spectating at races. There was also a great deal of national pride to be gained from British machines winning major events such as the Isle of Man TT. Norton machines had particular success here, often coming in the first three places in the Senior TT.¹²⁶ An ominous heralding of what was to come manifested itself in British superiority being shaken by BMW taking the first two positions in this event in 1939.¹²⁷

Life in the United Kingdom during the Thirties was not as gloomy as might be expected, if only the hardship produced by unemployment and the Depression are considered.

‘You need money in this England, but you do not need much money. It is a large scale, mass-production job, with cut prices...’¹²⁸

Two of the general areas concerning the continuing debate regarding the standard of living are the consumption of goods and services and the general health of the population.

According to Coffin:

‘The fundamental dividing line between the classes could be found in the zone of consumption. Consumption was the sphere in which social inequalities and working-class deprivations were most clearly felt.’¹²⁹

The above writer also states that, ‘A standard of living was neither immediate, nor everyday.’¹³⁰ It varied according to such vagaries as luck, competence, geographical location, and health.¹³¹ The debate regarding the standard of living in relation to Britain’s

¹²⁶ TT Database, <http://www.ionmtt.com>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007)

¹²⁷ TT Database.

¹²⁸ Priestley, J. B., *English Journey*. (London: Heinemann, 1936), cited in Stevenson, J., *British Society, 1914 – 45*. (London: Penguin, 1990), p.130.

¹²⁹ Coffin, J. G., ‘A “Standard” of living? European perspectives on class and consumption in the early twentieth century.’ *International Labor and Working-Class History*. 55 (1999) p.11. The practice of buying and wearing of clothing, preparing meals, organising domestic routines, and arranging domestic space, made the different earnings of a civil servant and industrial worker socially significant – embodied, measureable, lived. Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid, p.6.

¹³¹ For an analysis of regional variations see, Stevenson, J. & Cook, C., *The Slump:...* chapter 6, pp. 8 – 30.

population's general state of health derives much of its data from contemporary documents regarding mortality and morbidity rates, and in the measurement of malnutrition. These records tended to be in the main optimistic and in need of careful analysis.¹³²

Social class affected both of these issues. McKibbin's analysis of these issues finds that for instance, during this period, the upper-classes saw a 'shift in the balance of wealth from land and international finance to commerce, manufacturing, and food processing.'¹³³ They were relatively unaffected by economic conditions.¹³⁴ The standard of living of the middle-class varied hugely from one end of its membership to the other, depending upon occupation.¹³⁵ There was an emphasis here on maintaining appropriate standards of middle-class life.¹³⁶ The working-classes underwent wage variations which affected their living standards. Between 1914 and 1920, there was a rapid increase, followed by a fall until 1923, and stabilization until the end of the period under study.¹³⁷ This could be distorted by unemployment. It is generally accepted that the worst period of the decade was during 1933, but things improved after this.¹³⁸ In addition to this, there was a rise in general income for the entire population. Three quarters of Britain's families, (8.6million) had an income of £4 or less. Middle class families numbered 2 ½ million and had £4 -£10 a week to live on. The remainder, the upper classes, comprised some 617,000 families.¹³⁹

¹³² Webster, C., 'Healthy or hungry Thirties? *History Workshop Journal*. 13 (1982) p. 112. For a further analysis of social conditions relating to the standard of living, see: Hutt, A., *The Condition of The Working Class in England*. (London: Martin Lawrence, 1933); Burnett, J., *Plenty and Want: A Social History of Diet in England From 1815 to the Present Day*. (London: Nelson, 1966); Stevenson, J., *Social Conditions in Britain Between the Wars*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977).

¹³³ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures*... p.40

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p.42.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, p.71.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p.72.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, p.114.

¹³⁸ Mowat, C. L., *Britain Between the Wars*... p.490.

¹³⁹ *Ibid* p.490.

Prices, after falling until 1932, rose slightly until the end of the period.¹⁴⁰ These were some of the factors involved in a new consumerism, which allowed previously considered luxuries such as wireless or gramophones to become affordable to the general public, due to mass-production techniques. According to Stevenson, the most accurate gauge of living standards relates to consumer expenditure per head, which rose from £75.38 in 1910 – 14, to £92.76 in 1935 – 38, a rise of almost a quarter.¹⁴¹ The ‘Everyman’ concept, which has been explored above, was not merely confined to motor vehicles.¹⁴² It was widespread in the consumer goods sector of the economy and a common theme in consumerism.

Motorcycling during this time had to increasingly contend with its rival, the motorcar for its place in a person’s transport aspirations. Improvements in engine and frame design continued, during this period, mainly through experimentation carried out on the racetrack. Overhead valve engines were more efficient than sidevalve ones, and electric lighting superseded the antiquated use of carbide lamps. It was also necessary to remain competitive with other manufacturers, to win sales, in the view of increased efficiency in the manufacture of motorcars. As the decade proceeded, the more astute members of the industry realised that the threat from Germany did not entirely lie on the racetrack.¹⁴³ Following a trip to the 1935 Leipzig Fair, James Leek of BSA set into motion plans, which within twelve months would result in large sections of the company being put over to the production of military equipment, such as rifles and machine guns.¹⁴⁴ Many other motorcycle firms also did this and began production of motorcycles designed within strict

¹⁴⁰ Ibid p. 492..

¹⁴¹ Stevenson, J., *British Society...* p.124. The subject of living standards is analysed further in chapter four of Stevenson’s work. pp. 103 – 142.

¹⁴² Horn, P., *Women in the 1920’s*. (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995). p.181. A 1923 advertisement for Drages of High Holborn pianos, showed a satisfied ‘Mrs. Everyman.’

¹⁴³ Ayton, C. et al, *The History...* p.145.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid p.146.

War Division limits. After a 10,000-mile test period, a prospective machine was stripped, and inspected for wear. The test involved the machine being used on every conceivable terrain it was likely to come across in a theatre of war.¹⁴⁵ Such machines were meant to be easy to work on, and had to be within specific weight limits. During the six years of conflict 420,000 motorcycles were to be supplied to the allies.¹⁴⁶ Skills gained by the ordinary sporting rider in trials, scrambles and other off-road events, were to be put to good use. War was declared whilst the International Six Days Trial was being held at Salzburg. Some 30 British soldiers, who constituted the army team, had a 250-mile journey to make to the Swiss border, after a general lack of communication did not allow them to keep up with international events.¹⁴⁷ These events and festivals were an integral part of club culture and associational life and will be further discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁵ Orchard, C. J. & Madden, S. J., *British Forces Motorcycles, 1925 – 45*. (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997). p.1.

¹⁴⁶ Ayton, C. et al, *The History...* p.176.

¹⁴⁷ *The Motor Cycle*, Sep. 7th 1939 p. 325.

Chapter 2. Motorcycle clubs: their formation, composition and function.

Motorcycle clubs were and remain an important part of the motorcycling scene, primarily for their unifying aspects, as a means of indulging in social and sporting functions, and as forums for the interchange of ideas, regarding technical aspects of the pastime. This chapter will explore the phenomenon of clubs using the primary source of contemporary journals, and the secondary source of the few related modern texts on the social and cultural aspects of motoring. This aspect of interwar associational life has not been explored at a scholarly level. The aim of this chapter is to concentrate upon how the riders could be united by a common interest and how they conducted themselves whilst following it, which breaks new intellectual ground.

In his analysis of class and leisure, Stephen Jones' posthumously published work on working class sporting activities provides an in-depth study of this part of the subject. Jones identifies the First World War as being an important pivotal point for change in Britain's economic 'environment upon which sport ultimately rests.'¹ He claimed that the main trend that resulted from this was that sport in general became more commercialised. The main changes that are pertinent to this study are twofold. Firstly, war allowed men and women to experience motorized technology at first hand, becoming more familiar with it throughout the spectrum of social classes. Secondly, the availability of a glut of ex War Department motorcycles provided a short-term supply of relatively cheap, reliable second-hand machines, which the ex-serviceman would have been familiar with and able to afford. War had allowed a broader spectrum of society to become familiar with motorcycling, which was a pursuit, which had previously been followed by more eccentric

¹ Jones, S., *Sport, Politics, and the Working Classes*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988). p.42.

or better off members of the public.² The growing popularity of motorcycling allowed in ideal circumstances for commercial exploitation in some sporting aspects of the pursuit. Jones asserts that during this period there was a growth in the need for sporting activities, due to a general increase in leisure resulting from a rise in real wages and a fall in working hours. He describes the demand for these types of sport as 'being quite buoyant' during the interwar years.³ Motorcycling during this period in terms of spectator sports concentrated in two main areas. Firstly, spectating at club-organised events such as hill-climbs or trials proved enormously popular. It is likely that these would have had a more likely appeal to motorcycling enthusiasts and club-members, or other motorists due to the necessity of transportation requirements to such events. These activities were usually *ad-hoc* affairs and consequently un-commercialised. Conversely, speedway's introduction and growth in popularity as a spectator sport was a commercialised phenomenon, which being centred in urban areas usually as a supplement to greyhound racing in, for example, at Belle Vue in Manchester were designed to appeal more to the general public. They provided mid-week spectacle and razzmatazz designed to appeal to the masses in a way that mud-spattered trials rides could not. Jones has also analysed violent crowd behaviour at mass spectator sports such as football, claiming that it acted as a much-needed safety valve for the status quo, ensuring that for the most part, 'grievances did not spill over into oppositional political forms.'⁴ Mass attendances at motorcycle events such as speedway or hill climbs, did not reveal one instance of major crowd violence. One possible explanation for this may be that motorcycle enthusiasts and lay spectators at these events did not display partisan views towards competitors to the extent that violence towards supporters of other competitive sports was likely. The amateur status of those taking part in club

² The need after the Second World War for ex-servicemen to keep these old machines rideable was a prime reason for the founding of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club.

³ Jones, S., *Sport...* p.44.

⁴ Ibid, p.61.

organised events, and their generally light-hearted atmosphere were also notable factors found in the motorcycling journals.

Ross McKibbin's research on working class work and hobbies cites the Edwardian commentator Shadwell regarding the Englishman's apparent obsession with beating sporting records.⁵ The motorcycle when used as a sporting tool was an ideal example of this. Writing in 1922, Margaret Phillips noted a particular gender bias in which young males would take an interest in engineering or mechanical subjects.⁶ The motorcycle was promoted by the technical and enthusiast press as a relatively simple, easy to understand and satisfying medium for such tinkering, but for both genders. How much women compared to men used it in this way is not known. In 1895, the continental observer, Gerhard von Schulze Gavernitz noted the British workers' interest was awakened by technical problems in a way quite unlike other nations.⁷ Fifty years later, another observer still, '...thought many British workers took pleasure in machines and the handling of them.'⁸ It is possible that the motorcycle owning worker, via the challenge of tinkering to fix problems, satisfied this apparent obsession.

The Vickers Armstrong Whitworth Company records kept at Cambridge University reveal the organisation's positive promotion of a range of hobbies for its workforce evident in the profusion of clubs and associations operated on company premises. This shows the

⁵ Shadwell, A., *Industrial Efficiency: A Comparative Study of Industrial Life in England, Germany & America*. (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1920). p.29, cited in Winter, J., (ed.) *The Working Class in Modern British History: Essays in Honour of Henry Pelling*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). p.128.

⁶ Ibid chapter 7. McKibbin, R., 'Work and hobbies in Britain, 1880 – 1950.' p.129.

⁷ Ibid, p.137. Gerhard von Schulze-Gavernitz, (1864 – 1943) Professor of economics in Freiberg-im-Breisgau.

⁸ Ibid, p.138. Ferdynand Zweig, (1896 – 1988) Professor of Political Economy at the Jagiellonski University of Krakow.

importance placed upon these kinds of after-work activities by those in control as a means of providing rational recreation and promoting company loyalty.⁹

Peter Clark's study of the origins of the associational world provides a picture of the type of clubs predominant prior to the development of the motor vehicle from which clubs devoted to the latter could draw influence. Clark states that these early organisations covered a range of types such as benefit or friendly societies, along with those of a philanthropic nature.¹⁰ There were also societies devoted to the moral and economic or social improvement of the nation.¹¹ Clark also notes the emergence of a '...skein of social and cultural contact, which pulled together upper and middling social groups in a range of communities.'¹² This was echoed in the social spectrum found in some motorcycle clubs. Clark's study reveals that by the close of the 18th century, Britain had become an associational society.¹³ By the dawn of the motoring age, such associations as motor clubs were by no means unusual, there being as Clark claims, a general acceptance that sport and hobbies be run by clubs by the 1890s.¹⁴ The Cooperative Wholesale Society was also associated with such beneficial pursuits, alongside its other activities as well as itself being a producer of motorcycles.

A comparative study of a similar form of associational life, from a later period, which has been undertaken by the noted academic H. F. Moorehouse, can usefully be discussed here,

⁹ Cambridge University Library Manuscripts Room, Vickers Archive Cat: B109. The company produce a journal covering all the associations under its aegis, including social and athletic clubs, football, hockey and swimming clubs and a Philatelic society. For further insight into this, see appendix 10.

¹⁰ Clark, P., *British Clubs and Societies, 1580 – 1800: The Origins of an Associational World*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). p.435.

¹¹ Ibid, p.437.

¹² Ibid, p.453.

¹³ Clark, P., *British Clubs and Societies...* p.469.

¹⁴ Ibid. p.475

in order that similarities and differences can be found.¹⁵ This writer produced the definitive picture of the America Hot Rod scene. As a means towards this, he devotes an entire chapter of his book to an analysis of the main American magazine for the drag racing enthusiast, *Hot Rod*.¹⁶ His reason was that this journal and others sought to, ‘...articulate the precise notion of what the sport and enthusiasm should be and take action to ensure that this vision had a commensurate reality for the ordinary participant.’ and that a neglect of such avenues of creation is one way that contemporary studies of sport and leisure are deficient.¹⁷ Moorehouse’s chapter through this method provides a concise analysis of these factors. Interwar motorcycling enthusiast journals provide a comprehensive picture of the activities of the motorcyclist of this era. *The Motor Cycle*, *Motor Cycling*, and others, through their diverse contents, give not only details of sporting activities or technological innovations, but also provide a valuable insight into some of the character traits of their readership, via the texts of articles within them pertaining to the rider rather than the machine. For instance, those concerning types of rider as tongue-in-cheek forms of self-analysis during the period, provide great insight into what the writers and possibly their readership imaged the archetypal British motorcyclist to be. These specialist journals proved invaluable in providing a parallel analysis to Moorehouse’s work.

The above author also describes the perceived need by the hot rod enthusiast’s chief journal for a single, unified national organisation for the sport. This became the National Hot Rod Association, [NHRA] and was set up with help from the journal which hereafter

¹⁵ Moorhouse, H. F., *Driving Ambitions: An Analysis of American Hotrod Enthusiasm*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991).

¹⁶ Ibid. p.45

¹⁷ Ibid.

devoted some of its pages to NHRA matters.¹⁸ This need for a more regulated sport tended to conflict with the popular perception of hot-rodders as being outside the law. The organisation's intention was to legitimise the sport. The governing body for motorcycle sport, the Auto Cycle Union had aims that were generally similar to those of the NHRA. The ACU was formed at the dawn of motorcycle sport in Britain, having its origins in 1903 as the Auto Cycle Club. There were fundamental differences in the two organisations, primarily found in the outlooks of the sports. Hot-rodding was an outlandish, radical pursuit, which was considered by some to have been indulged in by mechanically-minded tearaways. The founding of the NHRA represented a step towards maturity and legitimacy by its practitioners. Although some contemporaries considered the practice of motorcycling similarly outlandish when it first appeared, the ACU conversely was formed at a time when Edwardian gentilities and manners were to the fore, and attempted to continue to be run along those lines.

Moorhouse has also revealed the importance stressed by organised hot-rodding clubs of the benefit of positive propaganda. Public relations-exploitable events designed to take the emphasis away from the anti-social elements of their enthusiasm, (i.e. racing in the streets) such as hill-climbs, reliability runs or tours were to be encouraged.¹⁹ These and other events were intended to clean up the image of the movement. Concerning this, there were similar concerns both by clubs and the British motorcycle industry's controlling body, the British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturer's Trading Union. Interviewees mention the strict attitude against unruly or disrespectful behaviour by club members during sporting or social events.²⁰ The motorcycling journals recognised the need for this to waylay any

¹⁸ Moorhouse, H. F., *Driving Ambitions...* p.47

¹⁹ Ibid. p.56

²⁰ Respondents 1, 3, and 10 were all active club members during or after the interwar period.

anti-motorcycling feelings and consequent governmental interference whilst the industry placed great importance on clubs as being ambassadors for the sport to safeguard and encourage sales.²¹

Moorhouse also recognises that the economic exploitation of a sport can result in '...struggles concerning the defence of the external frontiers of the social space the enthusiasm inhabits' with the resulting need to ward off threats to its existence.²² In the case of hot-rodding, with its origins in illegal speed contests, the social space was the public road and sometimes the town or city streets. Threats to this lay in legislation on emissions, certificates of fitness as well as local police controls.²³ They were lessened by organised competitions in desert areas such as the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. The equivalent problems for British motorcycle sports lay mainly in the country's restrictive motoring laws. There were for instance no legal road races on the British mainland, (the main reason for the popularity of the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy competitions remains its lack of speed limit outside towns.) This was mainly because of the 20mph speed limit, which remained in force until 1930. Club-organised reliability trials and other long-distance events had therefore a speed restrictive element within them. These and other restrictions such as opposition from organisations antagonistic towards intrusions into the countryside persisted during the period and were instrumental in the politicisation of some motorcyclists epitomised in the membership of the British Motor Cycle Association discussed in chapter two.

²¹ Warwick University Modern Record Centre. MSS 204/1/1/15 p.2659. A minute of the BCMCMTU meeting on 24/6/38 stressed the importance of securing that local motorcycle clubs were the centres for creating favourable propaganda and raising the prestige of the sport.

²² Moorhouse, H. F., *Driving Ambitions...* p.92

²³ *Ibid.* p.133

Throughout his book, Moorehouse has argued that:

‘One way in which consumption and identities are structured and presented in advanced capitalist societies is via institutions variously known as hobbies, sub-cultures, leisure activities etc. which I have called enthusiasms and which can in many cases contain a sport as their core activity.’²⁴

Motorcycling holds as valid a claim to this as hot-rodding. Consumption and identity are the key words in the above quotation. The possession of a motorcycle was a form of consumerism, which could not be taken up passively given the nature of the machine and the uses to which it was put. Also, ownership and use of a motorcycle gave the users the complex set of characteristics which identified them as motorcyclists, the most defining of which was their attire. The identity of the motorcycling enthusiasm was also inextricably linked with the machines. Club membership was an almost inevitable result of being involved in the pursuit, when this was done at more than a very basic level, with the motorcycle being used as a utilitarian device. This is emphasised by the great number of clubs of this sort.

In his final analysis, Moorehouse points out five significant areas of note in his work.²⁵ Firstly, he claims that the hot rod enthusiasm underwent dynamic cultural processes such as a re-defining of the work ethic and the ‘true American genius.’ This was claimed to have existed in for instance personal inventiveness and a penchant for backyard experimentation, in order that the enthusiast’s machine might become more competitive. There are here obvious links between the hot-rodder and the interwar British motorcyclist. The work ethic is translated into a willingness to service one’s own machine, thereby

²⁴ Ibid. p.223

²⁵ Ibid. p.224

saving money and developing self-reliance, whilst personal inventiveness was found in a willingness to tinker, when combined with a liking for competitive motorcycling.

Secondly, motorcycling, like hot-rodding used a 'rhetoric of individualism and community.' Interwar period motorcyclists displayed individuality by their choice of vehicle, especially the hard core of enthusiasts towards the end of the period when a cheaper motorcar was an increasingly viable option. 'The camaraderie of the insider and the minutiae of membership in a special world of knowledge' is also an appropriate description for club life, although this might equally apply for a variety of clubs.²⁶

Kinship, community and recognition of individual ability are important elements of clubs and associations. There was a strong emphasis upon individual ability in motorcycle clubs of this period. The ownership of an expensive motorcycle did not automatically promote respect from peers within the club. What did was the rider's ability and skill, which was most ascertained from mastery of machine control required in competitive events.

In Moorhouse's third point concerning consumption, he states that the possession of goods need not be entirely equated with passivity, musing, stylistic display, or illusory hedonism.²⁷ Hot-rodding, he claims, has an emphasis on involvement in personal projects, grazed knuckles, deferred gratification, and other time-consuming, satisfying involvements.²⁸ The essence of hot-rodding lay in developing a discarded or worn out machine and improving its performance via a series of progressive stages over time, until the end product exceeded the original attributes of power and manoeuvrability. Again, motorcycling at grass-roots level involved a similar set of circumstances. When the

²⁶ Ibid. p.225

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

enthusiast was young, the first motorcycle acquired often was small, very cheap, and in need of repair.²⁹ Great satisfaction was expressed when the machine became useable by the efforts of the rider.

The fourth point made by Moorehouse concerns commodification and the commercialisation of leisure, whereby all aspects of the pursuit became of interest to big business, who attempted to sanitize and pre-pack hot-rodding to make it saleable to a wider market. The essential traits of the enthusiasm were to be reduced into a, 'bland, regulated, standardised, homogenised, safe, ordinariness.'³⁰ Moorehouse notes the opposition to this by aficionados of the pursuit. The author also asserts that there was a clandestine interest in hot-rodding by both General Motors and Ford, who sought to benefit from the reflected glory of victorious competitors, in order that the youth market was encouraged to purchase their machines.³¹

There is little evidence to support a similar set of circumstances whereby commercial interests exploited motorcycling apart from the relatively specialised sport of speedway, although most motorcycle manufacturers acknowledged the use of competition wins as good publicity, following the maxim that 'racing improves the breed.' There was also a desire by the motorcycle industry to promote the pursuit for the masses by the development of 'Everyman machines.' Also, during this period efforts were made by some companies to enclose the machines, covering parts in panelling, ostensibly to keep the rider and machine cleaner, but also having the effect of sanitization and insulating the rider from the intricacies of the engine; something which did not prove popular with

²⁹ Respondent 3 for example purchased a 150cc Triumph at 16yrs old for £2, repaired it, and used it to commute and undertake small tours.

³⁰ Moorhouse, H. F., *Driving Ambitions*...p.225

³¹ Ibid, p.195

enthusiasts, many of whom considered that an exposed engine not only made maintenance easier, but also enhanced the machine's appearance.

Moorehouse's final point concerns the inevitability of a symbiotic existence between the consumer and corporate elements, both of which were instrumental in the development of the pursuit.³² There was, he claims, a tension between the corporate element and the consumer, which existed at the grass-root level of the pursuit. Whilst the corporate element wished to make the activity available to all for profit-based motives, some enthusiasts always required the satisfaction and exclusivity that comes from being a devotee, with inside knowledge of the subject. Whilst hot-rodding was a specialised form of motoring enthusiasm, motorcycling was a far more catholic form of practical transport. Specialist cliques devoted to particular forms of the sport such as speedway did of course exist, although there was no particular opposition from them towards the commercialisation of their sport.

Turning to the associational form relevant to this study, The Motor Cycling Club, [MCC] is generally accepted as being one of the first clubs devoted to the pastime. The club was formed in London in November 1901, when the idea of attaching an engine to a bicycle frame had at last gained in popularity, as well as a degree of reliability to warrant the formation of such an organisation.³³ Its name betrays its roots, which were firmly in the sport of cycling, the 'Motor' being at this time a prefix both in name and on the machines. Many makes of motorcycles began as bicycles with engines attached to them. Motorcycles and motorcars at this time were felt to be a menace to society, frightening the horses, and

³² Ibid. p.226

³³ Up until 1896 it had been a legal requirement for all motor vehicles to be escorted by a man preceding them with a red flag at 4 mph. After this 12mph was legally possible, and almost always exceeded.

creating mayhem wherever they went. Perhaps as a means of counteracting this view, the club had been formed by ‘...responsible London businessmen, apart from Selwyn Edge, the currently successful racing driver, who described his occupation as “gentleman”’.³⁴ Drivers of motorcars were included in the membership from the beginning. This is because cars and motorcycles were of similar primitive construction at the time and their operators had a similar pioneering philosophy. The club was motivated by a need to organise and compete in sporting events. From the outset, social runs to Brighton, race meetings to Crystal Palace and from 1907, Brooklands. Long distance trials were competed in, and the club soon ran, its own long-distance events.³⁵ By the period under discussion, there was a certain amount of prestige attached in membership of the oldest British motorcycling club. This is hinted at in a list of entrants to the 1928 London – Gloucester – London trial, organised by the North-West London Motor Club. Here, over 200 entrants took part, from a wide diversity of clubs, and there were six members of the Motor Cycling Club in attendance. All other clubs have their names listed in full, whilst the senior club is listed as ‘M.C.C.’³⁶ One of the most important differences between motorcycling in this earlier age and the modern pastime lies in the earlier rider’s keenness to test themselves and their machines. Modern machines tend to be developed as far as possible in terms of reliability and comfort. They are ‘sanitised’. Earlier machines were more primitive. Why should motorcyclists be so keen to indulge in their pastime that they would be prepared to travel such great distances over relatively poor roads, on machines which when compared to modern ones were primitive, slow, and unreliable? The answer to this lies somewhere in the psychology of the population as well as socio-economical

³⁴ <http://www.themotorcyclingclub.org.uk/>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007).

³⁵ Ibid. The London/Lands End, London/Exeter, and London/Edinburgh trials are still organised by this club. The sheer distances involved when put alongside the road conditions and machinery available, show the intrepid character of the contemporary motorcyclist.

³⁶ North West London program for the London-Gloucester-London Trial. Dec 8th 1928. Available at VMCC archives. It is possible that the MCC had a similar prestige as its namesake in the cricketing world.

factors. Frugality and providence are considered virtues in times of economic hardship. For some, the interwar period fitted this category. Also, the possession of a frugal motorcycle was still relatively special and may consequently have been used as much as possible, especially when owned by the adventurous. During the period between the wars, the activities of the Motor Cycling Club remained popular, its three major events attracting numerous entrants. To celebrate its 21st anniversary, the club organised a run from Lands End to John o' Groats. Starting on June 6th 1923, competitors were to travel through the night and all the next day, to arrive at Carlisle in the evening. After another day and night riding, they were to arrive at John o' Groats, having travelled nearly 900 miles.³⁷ Such events quickly became a traditional part of the motorcyclist's calendar. For example, the 1925 London-Edinburgh trial had become a routine event to some competitors, so much so, that a few neglected to prepare their machines properly for the journey, whereas some opted out of competing, considering that it had become too easy:

'For this years event- held last Friday night and Saturday- there was not a single observed hill, (a place where penalty points were awarded for stalling or footing your machine) and in consequence many strong supporters of the Edinburgh run in the past refrained from participating.'³⁸

Because it held long-distance events such as these, the MCC was classed as a non-territorial club by the Auto Cycle Union, [ACU]. The ACU constituted the main body of control for motorcycling during this period. Although it dealt with social aspects of the pursuit to some extent at the start of its existence, by the 1920s and 1930s its main influence lay in the sporting side, providing rules and guidelines for the conducting of trials, races, and other forms of competition, as well as providing advice about setting up and running clubs. Its importance lay in the fact that the majority of motorcycle clubs did

³⁷ *The Motor Cycle*, Mar 8th 1923 p.323.

³⁸ *The Motor Cycle*, Jun 4th 1925 p.828.

either organise or compete in some form of sporting activity.³⁹ The Union began its life in 1903 as the Auto Cycle Club commencing as the motorcycle committee of the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland, which later became the RAC.⁴⁰ It became the Auto Cycle Union in 1907.⁴¹ The ACU from its instigation attracted important figures to its ranks, and by 1910 had as its president, H.S.H Prince Francis of Teck.⁴² Its first competitions were races at Phoenix Park, Dublin, and Castlewellan, during the week of the Gordon Bennett Race week.⁴³ In 1903 they ran the first 1000 mile trial, in which competitors set out on routes of approximately 100 miles from Crystal Palace over a period of 10 days. Apart from other sporting events such as hill climbs and races, the ACU involved itself in its infancy in politics, with varying degrees of success.⁴⁴

By the 1930s there was, amongst motorcyclists, a perceived need for an organisation, which catered for the needs of the ordinary motorcyclist, as the ACU had done at its inception, and continued to do in motorcycle sport. It was felt, that this was no longer the case, and that no real lobbying body had been able to temper the effects of legislation such as the 1934 Road Traffic Bill, which, when it became law, imposed among other things, compulsory insurance for riders and pillions, as well as speed restrictions, which, having been removed four years previously, had given motorists previously unrivalled

³⁹ See appendix 4.

⁴⁰ *Exion of The Motor Cycle, Motor Cycle Cavalcade*. (London: Iliffe & Sons, 1950). p.9.

⁴¹ Garnier, P., *The Motor Cycling Club*. (London: David & Charles, 1989). p.165. There still exists a form of rivalry between the MCC and the ACU regarding which was formed first. This is another reason why the MCC is not ACU affiliated.

⁴² *The Motor Cycle* Jan 17th 1910 p. 40 His Serene Highness Francis Joseph Leopold Frederic of Teck, brother to Queen Mary, unfortunately died in 1910, aged 41.

⁴³ *The Motor Cycle* Jan 17th 1910 p.41. Gordon Bennett can be said to have started the sport of international motor racing through his sponsorship of the Bennett Trophy races from 1900 to 1905; a trials course in the Isle of Man was named after him. He gave a trophy for long-distance hot-air ballooning in 1906 that started the modern sport (the international Gordon Bennett balloon race still continues).

⁴⁴ *The Motor Cycle* Jan 10th 1935 p.43. In 1910 for example the ACU was in the process of appealing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for a reduction in the Inland Revenue tax for motorcyclists. It was also responsible for the foundation of the Auto Cycle Legion, which was to be responsible for '...placing a number of motorcyclists at the disposal of the nation in the event of a national danger.' in the event of war.

freedoms.⁴⁵ Although the RAC and AA also had motorcycling committees, the loyalties of both organisations, were divided by concerns for other motorists. By the interwar period, motorcyclists and car drivers no longer felt the same degree of affinity for one another, which had existed during the dawn of motoring. There was further discontent with the ACU, as a result of the Everyman trial fiasco.⁴⁶ The editor of *The Motor Cycle* felt that what was needed was, ‘...an association exclusively devoted to fighting the motor cyclist’s cause when adverse legislation is proposed.’⁴⁷ The foundations of such an organisation had been laid in the previous year. In April 1934 the inaugural meeting of the British Motor Cycle Association, [BMCA] took place, via lunch at the Savoy Hotel, London. Chaired here by Lord St. Oswald, its benefits to members were similar to those of the RAC and AA, but it aimed to concentrate on supporting motorcycling exclusively.⁴⁸ This association constituted the emergence of what in effect is the first motorcycling pressure group with the aim of combating legislation, which restricted motoring freedom. Such organisations continue to exist in the British Motorcycling Federation, and the more militant, Motorcycle Action Group and represent a line of continuity of concern for motorcycling freedoms.⁴⁹ The founders of these earlier organisations felt that anything done in the way of legislation regarding motorcycling by Parliament should not be made piece-meal; rather that it should be debated and modified by people involved in the pastime. It was pointed out at a meeting of the BMCA in 1935 that motorcyclists paid over £1.25m in taxation, and that their views should not be ignored. It was also acknowledged that the motorcyclist’s greatest enemy in these matters was his or herself in that a

⁴⁵ *The Motor Cycle* Jan 10th 1935 p.38.

⁴⁶ See page 31.

⁴⁷ *The Motor Cycle* Jan 10th 1935 editorial. In 1960, the Federation of National and One-make Clubs was formed. This later became the British Motorcyclist’s Federation.

⁴⁸ *The Motor Cycle*, Apr 5th 1934 p.457. For an annual subscription of one guinee, the member was entitled to, free petrol in case of breakdown, free inner tube in the event of a burst, free towing to garage, engineering advice, touring advice, and use of a chain of accommodation at cheap rates.

⁴⁹ MAG was formed in 1973 as a result of the wearing of helmets becoming compulsory. For an analysis of motorcycling pressure groups, see, McDonald-Walker, S., *Bikers: Culture, Politics and Power*. (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

common interest. Despite this, club officialdom and sponsorship of the pursuit was the domain of at least the middle classes, or higher.⁵⁴ Many clubs had members of the professions, such as doctors and clerics in their number, as will be seen in appendix 3. A kind of social hierarchy existed within clubs, which was made up of a complex mixture of factors such as the cost and sophistication of the member's machine, whether the member was a committeeman, and the degree of skill the member possessed in sporting activities. The position held within the club depended upon firstly, the degree of social deference allotted to the member; secondly, the amount of money members could invest in their machines and thirdly, the degree of skill, which the member used in riding and maintaining their motorcycle. A good 'clubman' was a skilled rider who could maintain his or her machine. Such factors were related, but do not depend entirely upon the member's social class outside the club. Whether clubs devoted entirely to motorcycles, i.e. MCCs had a class profile in a lower range than Motor Clubs, which held both cars and motorcycles within their ranks is not known, as actual lists of members for clubs in operation during this time are after extensive searching not to be found. The motorcycle's usually lower initial purchase cost, especially during the first part of the period would allow ownership and membership in the lower end of social scale. The increase in motorcar ownership, due to more readily available second hand cars has been investigated elsewhere.⁵⁵ Despite the possibility that car ownership might have drawn people away from motorcycle club membership, ownership of any car was usually more a matter of practicality rather than class awareness, when transport requirements changed in the advent of family increases. The articles which have been found in magazines and other journals dealing with individual cases can, at best hint at an analysis of class demographics in motorcycle clubs and in motorcycling in general. Also, the general tone

⁵⁴ See database in appendix 3.

⁵⁵ See S. O'Connell *The Car...* chapter 1.

of such journals, suggests an educated readership. Regular contributors such as *Ixion* of *The Motor Cycle* and *Cyclops* or *Gaudeamus* in *Motor Cycling* reveal by their adopted pseudonyms a classical education and infer a classically educated readership although such magazines are sufficiently 'readable' to be understood by the majority of general readers, despite also containing technical terms more readily understood by those initiated into the pursuit.⁵⁶

The fact that clubs, in any social or cultural sphere, exist at all, justifies the question of why they should exist or be needed. A partial answer to this would be that mankind is often gregarious by nature, and can gain a lot from shared experiences, as well as a certain degree of security. Motorcycle clubs are no different from any other in these respects. Motorcyclists were divided by contemporary journals into two sorts, the 'clubbable' and the solitary. Clubmen were considered as being more sociable and gregarious, simply because of their membership of such organisations. They might also be of a more sporting and competitive nature, because they would be more likely to be involved in the sporting part of the pursuit, through internal and inter-club competitions. Unlike those bastions of masculinity, the workingmen's clubs, which offered a, '...refuge, or bolt-hole, from domestic life,'⁵⁷ motorcycle clubs of this time usually welcomed both sexes into their membership. Whether women were offered full membership of clubs at this time is unclear from the data gathered in the database, although Swindon and District MCC claimed to have 45 members, '...not including the ladies.'⁵⁸ The London Ladies Motor Club was an exception to this. Men were involved mainly in a background role in this

⁵⁶ *Ixion* in Greek legend created the Centaur race and was punished by Zeus by being strapped forever to a flaming winged wheel. Also in Greek legend, a *Cyclops* was a member of a one-eyed race of giants. *Gaudeamus* is Latin and part of Apsley Grammar School, Frithden's school anthem. '*Gaudeamus igitur*' = 'So let us rejoice.'

⁵⁷ Lancaster, W. & Mason, T., (eds) *Life & Labour in a 20th Century City: The Experience of Coventry*. (Warwick: Cryfield Press, 1986). p.264.

⁵⁸ See club database in appendices.

organisation.⁵⁹ The role of women in motorcycling is explored in chapter 3. Motor clubs of all types tended to cater for participants rather than spectators. The ownership of a motorcycle necessarily meant that the owner was inclined to riding it rather than watching others do so.⁶⁰ Motorcycling 'Types' came under discussion in contemporary magazines and newspapers at this time. A 1920 edition of *The Times*, categorised motorcyclists into such types as 'genuine' and 'spurious knuts,' family men, and 'tuner's up.'⁶¹ A clubman might qualify for one or more of these categories. Some motorcycling journals seem to have been obsessed with self-analysis. A 1935 edition of *Motor Cycling* described three types of rider, all possessing a similar type of machine, but using them for different purposes.⁶² The article revealed that the sporting type of rider was heavily involved in club life. Elsewhere, concern was expressed regarding the clubman's habit of becoming involved with cliques within clubs, much to their detriment. Here was shown a tendency for riders with an interest in a certain part of the pursuit, for instance, grasstrack riding, to mix socially within the club with members with an identical interest, to the exclusion of members with other interests.⁶³ This tendency towards cliques was blamed for the demise of many clubs. A major difference was stressed between the motorcycle enthusiast, who had by his or her own hard labour, saved enough to own a second-hand machine, and the relative newcomer to the pursuit, who was capable of purchasing the latest sports model. There was, it was stressed a great deal of snobbery by the latter towards the former. The example of social stratification through the possession of newer articles via disposable income has been explored. David Gartman states that, 'Cars bear testimony to class

⁵⁹ See *The Motor Cycle*, Nov 10th 1927 p.820 for a celebration of women riders.

⁶⁰ This statement is qualified by the modern phenomenon of the collector, whose vehicles are more often polished than ridden.

⁶¹ *The Times* Jul 30th 1920 .

⁶² *Motor Cycling* Oct 23rd 1935 p.866. Bill, Jack and Harry. The first was a sporting rider, the second a tourist, and weekend jaunter, the third a ride to work man. The emphasis of the article suggested a stagnation in machine design.

⁶³ *The Motor Cyclist Review*, Mar 1930 p.412.

position, with luxury cars marking a commanding position...' and Sean O'Connell devotes a chapter to the difference between 'Sir Coupe and Lady de Ville, and 'Enery and Liz.'⁶⁴ A further analysis of what drives a motorcyclist to be involved in club activities, or remain a solitary rider, can be found if a comparison is made with the work of H. F. Moorhouse. Enthusiasm for motorcycling, can divide individuals into three groups. Firstly, and in the majority, are those whose riding habits are dictated by the forces of mass consumption and advertising. These tend to ride motorcycles, because they possess the capital and leisure time to be able to, and are dictated to by fashion trends. They are the least likely to be club members. The second type, attempt to adopt the whole style and ethos of motorcycling, forming a sub-culture around it. This type is rare in the inter-war period, being more common in later generations. It most readily conforms, within the category of 'Pseudo-Knut.' The final type in Moorehouse's analysis, the 'leisure pioneer' is deeply involved in the pursuit, and might be the core membership of clubs or representatives of the motorcycling industry, sport, or press. They provide inspiration for the other types.⁶⁵ People rode motorcycles during this period for a variety of social and economic reasons. Moorehouse's three types, although they provide a good overall picture of motoring characters, cannot fit each individual motorcyclist within them.

In order that some idea of the national distribution of clubs can be gained, the table formed from data gained from *Motor Cycling* magazine in 1932 can be used.⁶⁶ It deals mainly with ACU affiliated clubs. The information found shows that such clubs were divided into

⁶⁴ See Gartman, D., *Auto Opium...* p.53 for the cultural connotations of diverging automobile design and O'Connell, S., *The Car...*

⁶⁵ Moorhouse, H. F., *Driving Ambitions...* pp. 21-22.

⁶⁶ See club database in appendices. The year was chosen as representing an approximate mid-point for the period under study.

national sections.⁶⁷ The ACU divided its membership into regions known as centres. Appendix 6 is a list of centres with the area they covered, and the number within them, which were in correspondence with the magazine during the year in question. They are abbreviated as in the club database. The areas covered by the centres are specified in *The Auto Cycle Union Official Pocket Book*, for the year 1933.

The most prolific letter writers in the motorcycling population during 1932 appear to have resided in the South Eastern regional centre of the ACU. Fifty-four of the 61 clubs listed in the ACU handbook for this region, were in active correspondence with *Motor Cycling* magazine during this year, to advertise their social and sporting events. The South Eastern centre was, according to the ACU handbook, the second most populous region for clubs, it being slightly outstripped by the South Midlands centre, which had 70 ACU affiliated clubs, 48 of which corresponded with the journal during that year. It can be surmised that the most affluent area of the country, the south and southeastern region, appeared to have the most motorcycle clubs. The third most populous area for clubs during this time was Yorkshire, with 42 clubs, 26 of which corresponded. This is not surprising as it was at the time the largest county in Britain. The area most usually identified with the production of motorcycles, the Midlands, appears relatively poorly catered for, there being 27 clubs listed; 18 of which corresponded in the journal. This apparent deficiency can be offset by the neighbouring East Midland centre, which had 29 clubs, 23 of which corresponded with the magazine. Cheshire and the North Western centres combined had 54 affiliated clubs, (34 and 20 respectively) which gives a good idea of how popular motorcycle club membership was in this area of the country. The remainder of the country was relatively

⁶⁷ *The Auto Cycle Union Official Pocket Book*. (London: Auto Cycle Union, 1933), divided Britain into 17 regions. Within these it listed 383 clubs, as well as contacts for many similar organisations to itself, throughout the world.

sparse as regards motorcycle clubs, at least as regards membership of the ACU in England and Wales is concerned.⁶⁸ If the evidence is to be believed, the area worst catered for was the Northern and North Eastern centres, with only 5 and 9 affiliated clubs respectively. Seven of the North Eastern clubs were based in or around the Newcastle upon Tyne area.⁶⁹ South eastern and south-western Wales had 13 and 5 clubs, between them. The Cardiff MC & CC being part of the East South Wales centre, whilst Swansea MC made up part the West South Wales. In the far west of the country, the South-Western centre catered for 16 clubs. The most westerly of these was the Helston & District Auto Club, between Falmouth & Penzance. Motorcyclists living in the Eastern Centre, which included Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, had 12 clubs to choose from. A possible explanation for the distribution of clubs nationally, lies in the work of Howkins and Lowerson, who investigated trends in leisure.⁷⁰ According to these writers, Britain had been divided into two nations by the depression. Whilst some areas suffered 'The Hungry Thirties' others, notably the south and east, were less affected, especially workers in the white-collar sector. White-collar workers wages had generally risen less than those of blue collared workers, but they had also suffered less from wage cuts.⁷¹ The fall in prices during the mid and late twenties meant that the middle classes had more disposable income to spend on luxuries such as motorcycles, and more leisure to indulge in club membership.

⁶⁸ Scotland had its own version of the ACU, whilst Ireland had the Motor Cycle Union of Ireland.

⁶⁹ These included: Dunston & District; Newcastle MC; Newcastle & District; Parson's Heaton; South Shields & District; Stocksfield & District; and Vickers Armstrong Whitworth MC. Regarding the latter and Parson's Heaton, these represent examples of a notable phenomenon. In many engineering works, a new generation of employees invested leisure time in what can be regarded as an affinity between work and motorcycling. This was catered for by the management of such firms in the provision of buildings for club activities.

⁷⁰ Howkins, A. & Lowerson, J., *Trends in Leisure, 1919 – 1939*. (University of Sussex: University of Sussex Press, 1979). p.6.

⁷¹ Ibid. Government and local authority workers were an exception.

Findings regarding the demographic distribution of motor clubs compare favourably with Benson's findings in his work on the subject of consumerism.⁷² It was found that class was a deciding factor in the British consumer's choice and use of consumer goods and leisure occupations. Generally speaking, the higher a person's social class, the more leisure time and money to spend on leisure pursuits. If this is true then it is logical to state that middle class occupations could better afford to indulge in motorcycling, and had more time to do so. There was a decline in both the working week and year, which increased the amount of leisure time in all social classes. Time is an important element in consumption.⁷³ Changes in the distribution of wealth and purchasing power had by the period under scrutiny, left the Midlands and Southeast of England at an advantage over the rest of the country. It will be noted that the ACU chose to divide the Midlands into several 'centres,' which might lead to confusion. The majority of motorcycle and other motor clubs existed logically in places where there was a higher concentration of population, as more wealth and disposable income exists there. Benson claims that between 1901 and 1951, between 77 and 81% of the population lived in urban areas, and that of these, between 43 and 46% lived in the Midlands and Southeast, whilst between 18 and 17% lived in Greater London.⁷⁴ These areas were both significant in terms of the number of motorcycle clubs in existence there.

There was another important factor concerning the distribution of clubs, and the theoretical number of motorcyclists in the ACU regions. This is sport. For insurance purposes, the ACU forbade its members to participate in events run by clubs not affiliated to it. Clubs were usually only allowed to promote an event in their own centre. In order to

⁷² Benson, J., *The Rise of Consumer Society in Britain, 1880 – 1980*. (Harlow: Longman, 1994).

⁷³ Benson, J., *The Rise...* p.14. In the hundred years between 1880 and 1980 the working week fell from about 60 to 40 hours, giving twenty more hours for leisure pursuits.

⁷⁴ Benson, J., *The Rise...* p.15.

take part in events, a rider had to be a paid up member of a club within the centre. This also applied to larger Regional and National events. This gave a distorted picture of the distribution of motorcyclists, as a rider could join a club in a different part of the country from their own address, in order to take part in an event there. Many what might have been unimportant clubs had therefore, their membership distorted out of all proportion, due to their strategic positions.⁷⁵

There will now follow an analysis of some of the forms of sporting and social events undertaken by motorcycle clubs during this era. The most popular of sporting events was the trial, through which riders would be able to test both their riding skill and the reliability of their machines over a set route with a variety of terrains, from rough countryside tracks to main roads. Of the 385 clubs in the database for 1932, 240 mention either taking part in or running some form of sporting motorcycle trial.⁷⁶ These events had many variants, ranging from short afternoon competitions to long distance versions held over several days.⁷⁷ They were usually well attended. Famous events such as the Motor Cycling Club's 1926 Exeter Trial had 425 competitors, 259 on motorcycles, but they sometimes provided a source of conflict with the rural population, due to the disruption and damage caused, as will be seen later in this chapter.⁷⁸

An event less difficult to organise and less controversial was the gymkhana. These were light-hearted events designed to test members riding and other physical skills. The word 'Gymkhana' has heavy undertones of Empire and of India in particular, it being derived from a Hindi word '*gendkhana*' meaning a public resort for games, or more simply 'ball

⁷⁵ This information was provided by Bruce Main-Smith, a former member of the editorial staff of *Motor Cycling* and one time member of the RAC Motorcycle Management Committee, via email.

⁷⁶ See database in appendix 3.

⁷⁷ See appendix 4 for a list of sporting events and variants.

⁷⁸ P. Garnier, *The Motor Cycling Club*, p.51.

house'.⁷⁹ Gymkhanas in the accepted sense originated in India as a means of passing the time for the officers of army regiments, who felt it beneath their dignity to indulge in the rough and tumble of the games of 'other ranks'. Gymkhana games also had their origins in the sport of polo, which was introduced from India in 1872.⁸⁰ The word itself does not appear to have come into general usage until the beginning of the twentieth century.⁸¹ That motorcycle clubs indulged in gymkhana events reveals much about the nature of the character of their membership. In aping horse riding pursuits, motorcycle clubs placed themselves in a position of class, similar to that of horse riders who played polo, and indulged in gymkhanas of their own. These are clearly middle class pursuits, hinting at or proving middle class aspirations. The origins of the idea of using motorcycles for horse-related sports are unclear, as is the exact date when the idea emerged. Of the 385 clubs who corresponded with *Motor Cycling* during 1932 from which a database has been compiled, 42 clubs mentioned a gymkhana as one of the events they were to run.⁸² These particular events were widespread across the country with no region holding them more than others. As part of broader community events, motorcycle gymkhanas could provide an exciting element in town fairs. The Chester Le Street and District Motor Club held such an event in 1926.⁸³ Such events were popular with the general public, because they tended to be held within the confines of a small area, and could be viewed without having to travel relatively large distances, unlike trials and other types of rally. Gymkhanas also held a comic element within them, which could appeal to adults and children. Riders were placed in the position of having to operate their machines under unusual circumstances.

⁷⁹ Hoad, T. F., (ed.) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins*. (London: Guild Publishing, 1986). p.206.

⁸⁰ *The British Empire*. vol 6, p.1998. BBC Publications.

⁸¹ *Nuttall's Standard Dictionary*. (London: Frederick Warne & Co, 1892), makes no reference to it. The Indian Gymkhana Hockey Club was formed in 1916, '...to provide athletic facilities for Indian students.' See <http://www.indiangymkhanclub.co.uk>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007)

⁸² See database in appendix 3.

⁸³ *Chester le Street Chronicle*, Aug 13th 1926 p.4

For example, sometimes they would have to tow by rope, another person on a tray. This was known as 'surf board riding.' Miniature T.T. races were also popular, being held on short improvised circuits on convenient fields. Long-jumping the machine was also perennially popular. According to *Mentor of Motor Cycling*, the take off ramp for this should be of, '...gradual incline, rising to a height of about 4 feet' and '...preferably anchored to the ground.'⁸⁴ To perform an act of this sort required a deal of self-confidence, skill and courage, which was what it was designed to inspire.⁸⁵ Other, less dangerous events were intended as a less intense substitute for the former. These could include motorcycle football, egg and spoon, obstacle courses or other forms of trick riding.⁸⁶

Grasstrack racing, a predecessor of the modern motorcycle sport of motocross or scrambles was the easiest form of motorcycle racing to organise. All that was needed was a suitable field marked out with a circuit. In common with the accepted practice of the time, machines were usually ridden to such events and items considered superfluous such as lights stripped from them, to lighten the machine and minimise the effects of a spill. These items were replaced and the machine ridden home, when the racing was over, and probably to work the following Monday. This shows both the versatility of the machine and its rider, and the easy-going amateur nature of the events. Grasstrack was consequently one of the most popular of motorcycle sports during this period, and ideally suitable for motorcycle clubs to organise. Out of the 385 clubs found in the database of events for 1932, eighty-one held grasstrack racing either as one-off or regular events.⁸⁷ It was not until the nineteen-twenties that grasstrack rose in popularity as a club organised

⁸⁴ *Motor Cycling* Nov 24th 1926 p.41.

⁸⁵ This event seldom happens at modern rallies. Modern machines are usually, but not always heavier than inter-war period motorcycles.

⁸⁶ *Motor Cycling* Nov 24th 1926 p.41.

⁸⁷ See database in appendix 3.

sport, when in 1925, the ACU banned road racing and other similar events, due to the number of accidents, which occurred, amongst spectators and participants. The power of this organisation was again demonstrated. This action by the ACU placed motorcycle sport out of the restrictions imposed by the traffic law, most importantly, the 20mph speed limit. A boost for motorcycling over the then middle-class sport of golf occurred in 1927, when the Whitgift Club acquired the use of a former golf course near Croydon, and constructed a one-mile oval circuit for grasstrack racing.⁸⁸ By allowing the development of relevant skills, grasstrack races organised by motorcycle clubs, proved to be an ideal training ground for future speedway riders, and other motor-sportsmen.⁸⁹ This was most true in the case of speedway, which arrived from the antipodes in 1928, its most famous venue being at Belle Vue in Manchester, which opened in the same year. Many professional speedway riders' skills had originated and were honed at small club organised grasstrack circuits. Grasstrack remained a popular, less money-orientated event. As a training ground for speedway aces, as well as bona fide events in their own right grasstrack events can be claimed to hold an important position in promoting an interest in spectator sports involving motors, when workers of all classes had more leisure time. Spectators spent an increasing amount of money on viewing sports of all kinds, as the century progressed. In 1895 an estimated £1.96 million was spent in England and Wales in entrance to such spectator sports, rising to £9.04 million in 1950.⁹⁰

Motorcyclists could show their skill to their peers and compete with other clubs in a variety of organised events, such as treasure hunts, trials of many kinds such as reliability

⁸⁸ <http://www.speedway-faq.org/intro.html>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007).

⁸⁹ <http://www.biker.co.nz/Reviews.asp?id=82>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007). The names of John Surtees and Mike Hailwood feature in motorcycling's hall of fame, but their fathers, Jack Surtees and Stan Hailwood, were at one time top grass track sidecar drivers.

⁹⁰ Benson, J., *The Rise...* p.114. These figures are at current prices and represent a rise from 6p to 21p spent on such pursuits per head of population.

tests, timed events, those where pillions were involved, or the long distance events run by the MCC or ACU. Hill climbs were also a popular way to test the stamina of the machine and courage of the rider. These tended to be destructive to both, as in the case of America style Hillclimbs, where the hill was selected to be impossible to scale, resulting in machine and rider often being forced to fall backwards. Sand races were also held using specially adapted machines at such venues as Redcar beach in the Northeast or the sands of Pendine in Carmarthenshire in Wales.⁹¹

Other less sporting events held a place in the motorcyclist's calendar. Motorcycle rallies were another way that clubs could mix with other clubs, or develop a social bond within themselves, this time on a less competitive basis, than more serious sporting events. They were usually run along the lines of a camping weekend, sometimes at or near some venue of interest. The club database for 1932 shows that there were 11 clubs holding rallies, and an additional 5 holding what they described as camping weekends.⁹² Such events appear from the data to be far less common than more sporting venues. An example of such an event from an earlier date is found in the London Rally of Motorists, promoted by the North London MCC in 1925. Held in Alexandra Park, it attracted large Bank Holiday crowds that enjoyed such spectacles as plank-riding, balloon-bursting, slow racing, apple-bobbing, tent-pegging, steeplechasing, musical chairs and bun-biting. In addition awards were given for best-kept machines, and 'most suitably attired lady rider.'⁹³ More importantly, there were also awards for numbers in other clubs attending.⁹⁴ This promoted

⁹¹ For a by no means exhaustive descriptive list of such sporting events, see appendix 4.

⁹² See club database in appendix 3.

⁹³ Women's riding attire and its impact upon society, will be explored in chapter 3.

⁹⁴ *The Motor Cycle*, Jun 4th 1925. There is a great deal of difference between such events held at this time and modern day rallies, which usually involve riding to the venue, pitching a tent, and indulging in drinking, and or other substance abuse, then indulging in silly games, such as 'welly hoying' or egg catching. The evening is then spent with more drink, heavy rock discos, often with a band, then drunken reverie around a campfire until the early hours. The main difference between today's rider and those of

inter-club socialising. Events such as this combined the desire of the rider to use his or her machine to the fullest extent, and indulge in an ideal way of getting back to nature, camping. Advice was given in a 1922 edition of *Motor Cycling* regarding camping equipment, which ‘...harmonizes so delightfully with the pastime of motorcycling.’⁹⁵ It is this harmonization, which is interesting as it contrasts with the apparent modernist nature of the machine. In attending rallies and camping weekends, the clubman or woman is attempting to return to nature, by shaking off the trappings of industrialised society, whilst at the same time paradoxically using and enjoying one of its greatest achievements. The need to return to nature was a reaction to industrialisation which enjoyed a particular boom between the wars, although it held its origins prior to 1914, when the ‘rediscovery of the countryside’ was well underway, with hiking and rambling becoming increasingly popular.⁹⁶ In this way attending a motorcycle rally is an illustration of what Campbell refers to as ‘Modern hedonism.’ This psycho-cultural expression purports to express an individual’s need to indulge in the possibility being the controller of their own destiny, ‘...their own despot.’ In attending a rally the rallyist exercised total control over the stimuli he or she experienced, and the pleasure they received. By total immersion in their hobby, to the extent that they left the confines of their homes, and did their best to make motorcycling, ‘their home’ at least for a weekend, rallyists were indulging in a, ‘...highly rationalized form of self-illusory hedonism which characterised modern pleasure-seeking.’⁹⁷ Such events demonstrated a need to temporarily set aside conventions, to escape a humdrum existence and enjoy the pastime to the full.

yesteryear is their reluctance to use their machines in sporting activities once they arrive at a rally. Indeed, it is very rare that they are ever prompted or encouraged to do so, as many modern machines are too heavy and expensive to use for such purposes.

⁹⁵ *Motor Cycling* May 24th 1922 p.68.

⁹⁶ Stevenson, J., *British Society, 1914 – 45* p.392.

⁹⁷ Campbell, C., *The Romantic Ethic & the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987). p.76.

Clubs catering for all types of interest were sometimes stimulated into taking part in helping other less fortunate souls. The need for charitable organisations to enlist the aid, monetary and otherwise, of such societies, was important during the twenties and thirties, at a time before government took over the care of the sick and needy through the more comprehensive setting of the Welfare State.⁹⁸ There was also a general ‘disillusionment with old-style Edwardian liberalism,’⁹⁹ with the concept of social stigma, and the poor house lingering on. Motorcycle and other motor clubs organised many such charitable events. These acts of charity were beneficial in providing the ‘positive propaganda’ needed to dispel some of the public’s negative attitude towards motorcycling, which has been explored elsewhere.¹⁰⁰ For instance, a 1928 edition of the *Chester-le-Street Chronicle* gave notice of a motoring gymkhana event, to be held in Gosforth Park in aid of the Royal Victoria Infirmary’s £150,000 appeal fund.¹⁰¹ Elsewhere, the Waterloo and District Motor Club held a ‘Poor and Crippled Children Day’ with the co-operation of ToCH in 1932.¹⁰² The Cheltenham MCC donated £400 of club funds for an ambulance, in the same year.¹⁰³ These events would not have been isolated incidents. That they were undertaken gives some idea of the social classes of the club members. Concern regarding social welfare in general was an issue in which many middle class people had both the time and money to participate. Working class people were no less concerned about social welfare provision.¹⁰⁴ They were more likely to need such assistance. There is no data regarding the relative ability of the classes in organising charitable events, and there is no reason to assume that the working class was any less willing to do so, or that the middle

⁹⁸ This is epitomised by the publication of the Beveridge report in 1942 and the various post Second World War legislation, i.e. *National Health Service Act* 1946 and the *1948 Children’s Act*.

⁹⁹ Bourke, J., *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890 – 1960*. (London: Routledge, 1994). p. 22.

¹⁰⁰ See page 93.

¹⁰¹ *Chester-le-Street Chronicle*, Jul 6th 1928. The event was organised through the co-operation of Northern counties motor clubs and the Royal Artillery.

¹⁰² *The Motor Cycle* Oct 10th 1932 p.606. ToCH was an ex-serviceman’s society.

¹⁰³ *The Motor Cycle* Oct 10th 1932 p.605.

¹⁰⁴ Bourke, J., *Working Class Cultures...* p.9.

classes were better able to do so, or more sensitive to the need for them. Time and reserves of energy must have been deciding factors. Middleclass or higher committee members, who may have had the appropriate social contacts, rather than the working class rider-members, most probably directed charitable events organised by motor and motorcycling clubs.

The Annual General Meeting was the club's most important social event of the year, being an opportunity for members to assess the previous year's activities, elect committee members, award cups for sporting achievements, and plan future sporting and social events. The AGM was most importantly an ideal opportunity to reaffirm the unity of the club. Despite this, only 64 of the 385 clubs documented in the database for 1932 saw fit to advertise it. The reason for this is unclear. Did the clubs either not see it to be reasonable to hold such events regularly, or did they not deem it appropriate that news of them should be declared in a national periodical? Such events were in the case of large, well-established clubs, grand social events.

Clubs of all types need venues, which act as focal points from which social and sporting events can be based. A meeting place is also important in that it allows an element of bonding to take place within the membership. In effect, the place a club meets becomes the club, and a venue can instil pride within membership, if it has been well adapted to the club's needs. Clubs, without a physical focal point of this sort, lack a vital unifying element, which may lead to their early dissolution. In the case of motor clubs, the place most used for a venue, was a pub or hotel, as food and drink, as well as a clubroom could be provided. Of the 385 clubs in the database sample, 178 mentioned a venue.¹⁰⁵ Of these

¹⁰⁵ See database in appendix 3.

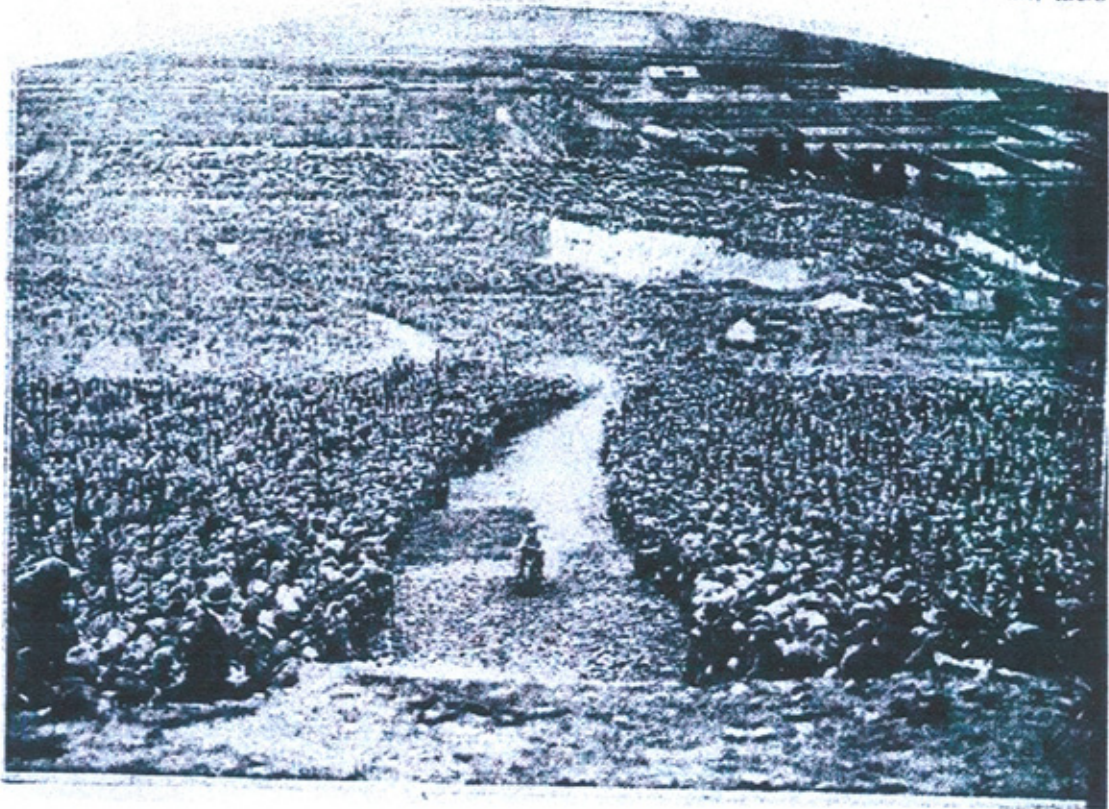
29 clubs met in places such as halls, which were sometimes owned by enthusiasts or club members. For instance, Derby and District Motor Club met at Donnington Hall, whose park is now a famous motor racing venue. Nine clubs mention meeting at cafes or restaurants, which would indicate an urban environment. Only seven clubs chose to meet at garage premises. If a company ran a motor club, it was usual for it to provide a venue for meetings. The Vickers Armstrong Motor Club and the Post Office Engineers are two examples of this, the latter meeting in the Engineer in Chief's office. Three of the clubs sampled met at sporting venues, in this case speedway tracks. The rest of the sample met at pubs or hotels of some description.¹⁰⁶

The industry was keen to maintain its status and importance within the economy. The motorcycle had decreased in popularity in relation to that of the motorcar from the mid-twenties onwards. If actual figures form any reasonable idea about a form of transport's popularity as opposed to mere proliferation. It is suspected that motorcycling maintained a hard-core of enthusiasts throughout the period. This is demonstrated by continued use of the vehicles in numbers, and by their continuing technical development. The pastime continued to be popular through its sporting aspects, as can be seen in the amount of press coverage.¹⁰⁷ An example of this being an estimated crowd of 40,000 in attendance at a hillclimb up Hepolite Scar, organised by the Bradford Motor Club:

¹⁰⁶ See database in appendix 3.

¹⁰⁷ See *The Times*, Sept 22nd 1933 for coverage of the International Six Days Trial; Aug. 17th 1933 for the Arbuthnot Trial; Apr 25th 1938 for the Pioneer Rally, and many other instances.

Fig. 2.1. *Hepolite Scar hillclimb.*



Source: *The Motor Cycle*, October 14th 1926.

The British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturer's Trader's Union were understandably concerned that their industry should continue to prosper, and vigilant as to means whereby its popularity should be maintained. In a meeting in June 1938, the amount of useful propaganda which motorcycling clubs might produce for the industry was discussed.¹⁰⁸ A minute of this meeting stressed the importance of making sure that local motorcycle clubs would be centres for creating favourable propaganda for the pastime. Through such clubs, prompt opportunity was to be taken in answering criticisms of motorcycling which may

¹⁰⁸ MRC MSS 204/1/1/15 p.2659.

arise in their own districts from magistrates, coroners, and the like.¹⁰⁹ The view was expressed that through local motorcycle clubs, the prestige of motorcycling could be raised, and that it was to the mutual benefit of both the manufacturer's union and the ACU, that everything should be done to increase the prestige and protect the interests of motorcyclists. In this connection reference was made to the limitation of the respective spheres of the ACU and the RAC and it appeared that there were certain matters affecting the interests of motorcycling which were felt by the ACU to be outside their province. The representatives of the ACU apparently did not favour a three party conference on the subject, between the manufacturer's union, the RAC and themselves, but felt that two party conferences would be useful. The main sphere of influence of the ACU, being that of controlling the sporting side of the pastime, whereas the RAC dealt with mechanical assistance, travel planning and accommodation, it is unlikely that the two bodies would have many common aims.¹¹⁰

The extent to which motor vehicle manufacturers appreciated the positive publicity gained by clubs, has been explored.¹¹¹ Britain in the early 20th century, was, '... a highly stratified society...' ¹¹² The conspicuous consumption of goods such as motor vehicles, would allow an individual to consider his or herself to be in a particular strata within society, and allowed for the categorisation of people and commodities. Motorcycle ownership is no exception. In becoming a motorcyclist, an individual was making a set of statements and value judgements, which made it possible for others to place them within society. In this way motorcar owners might be judged differently from motorcyclists, clubmen, from non-clubmen, and riders of sporting machines from those of small, commuter machines to ride

¹⁰⁹ It is interesting to note the interest taken by the industry in motorcycling clubs, in comparison to contemporary attitudes. Very little interaction takes place between the two spheres of the pastime today.

¹¹⁰ MRC MSS 204/1/1/15 p.2660.

¹¹¹ O'Connell, S., *The Car...* p.98.

¹¹² *Ibid* p.98.

to work. As with car club membership, the phenomenon of motorcycle clubs allowed this categorising process to be strengthened when, ‘... consumption took place within the context of ritualised group behaviour...’¹¹³ Some motorcycle manufacturers ran clubs designed for owners of their own make of machine. This often elicited a certain form of elitism, especially when clubs were based around exclusive, expensive machines such as Rudge or Raleigh. Other clubs, which were formed around lesser well-known machines, were set up by the manufacturer to provide assistance and advice to owners.¹¹⁴ A lot can be learned about motoring clubs during this period, simply from their names or the letters, which followed them. Clubs were designated in various ways, which gave clues as to the type of vehicles used. The club name can also give a clue as to the sort of rider catered for.¹¹⁵

With reference to appendix 5, numbers 16, Motor Racing Club; 17, Motor Sport Club; 19, Racing Club; and 20, Sporting Motor Cycle Club, cater for the more sporting type of rider, interested in high performance machines. The Dewsbury MSC in Yorkshire, held grasstrack events, as did the Montreal SMCC in Canada, one of the few non-British clubs to enter into correspondence with *Motor Cycling* during this year.¹¹⁶ Mountnessing Grasstrack RC based near Brentwood in Essex, also specialised in this type of sporting event, a predecessor of the modern sport of Moto Cross, which was relatively easy to set up and run, the only requirements being the availability of a suitable field.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Ibid p.98.

¹¹⁴ An example of this, found on the database in appendices is the Pouncy club. The Pouncy works in Dorchester, produced a range of Villiers-engined machines in the 1930s.

¹¹⁵ See club designations in appendix 5.

¹¹⁶ See club database in appendix 3.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Of the 384 clubs listed, 110 had 'and District' as part of their name. These clubs drew their membership from a specific town or city. Many other clubs were named after the town in which they were based. Sometimes in large conurbations, more than one club existed, as in Manchester, which had an MCC, the Manchester Eagle, Manchester Ace, as well as a University club.¹¹⁸ The remainder catered for either a firm or profession, such as the Vickers Armstrong Whitworth Motor Club, or the Civil Service Motoring Association, or were named after a specific make of machine, such as Rudge or Panther. Others had more imaginative names such as The Owls, or The Pirates.¹¹⁹ These latter two, as did many others, identified themselves by a club patch, or insignia, a precursor to the modern day practice of club colours, held by many clubs, some of a more dubious nature than others. Very little has been documented about The Owls and The Pirates, and other such organisations. A search of the catalogues at numerous databases showed that there were no records kept there on this subject.

Persons with a common interest are often inspired towards forming associations. Motorcyclists, who owned the same make of machine, would be able through associating themselves with other owners, to tap into a reserve of knowledge regarding their machines faults and foibles, not otherwise open to them. Solutions to problems could be found and shared within the club or more widely disseminated through the specialist journals. Clubs catering for a specific make of machine held many advantages over clubs admitting members with many types of machine, specialisation and technical aid being the main ones. Although clubs with a more catholic membership, still could pool their resources to common advantage, their lack of specification was a disadvantage.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Correspondence regarding club events specific to such one make clubs, which occurred during 1932 was entered into by ten clubs, in the data analysed.¹²⁰ Such clubs could have more than one branch, which was logical because machines tended to be distributed around the country. The London Douglas Motor Cycle Club for example catered for owners of a machine made in Bristol. This factory sponsored club was formed in 1928 by a few enthusiasts, who were inspired probably by the machines success on the racetrack and as it had been a reliable dispatch rider's mount in the First World War.¹²¹ Another example was the Pouncy Motorcycle Club, catering for a range of Villiers-engined two stroke machines, which were produced from 1930 – 38. It was based at the Pouncy works at Owermoigne, Dorchester. Running alongside this type of club, were clubs catering for machines fitted with certain types of engine. An important example of this is the JAP Motor Club. J. A. Prestwich motors were fitted to a wide range and diversity of machines from small motorcycles to powerful machines such as the Brough Superior, and even to light cars such as the Morgan. A November 1919 edition of *The Motor Cycle* shows that of 136 models listed, 27 used JAP engines.¹²² This situation had not changed in 1930. *Motorcycling* in February of that year listed 297 models and 38 makes of motorcycle, of which 53 models had JAP engines.¹²³ Thus, a member of the JAP Motor Club had a choice of at least ten different makes of motorcycle.¹²⁴ The British Two Stroke Club was a large organisation catering for machines with two-stroke engines, and was divided into sections, nationally, although it was based at T.G. Meeten's motorcycle shop at New Malden in Surrey. The club's purpose was originally to cater to the sporting enthusiast.

¹²⁰ See club database in appendix 3. These were: Ariel, Falcon, JAP, Levis, London Douglas, P&M, which were also Panther, Pouncy, Raleigh, Rudge, and Sunbeam.

¹²¹ Orchard, C. J., & Madden, S. J., *British Forces Motorcycles, 1925 – 45*. (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997). pp.43 – 48. Dispatch riders were motorcyclist couriers, who carried messages in battlefield areas.

¹²² *The Motor Cycle* Nov 26th 1919, p.107 – 111.

¹²³ *Motorcycling* Feb 28th 1934, p. 562 – 574.

¹²⁴ These were, AJW, Brough Superior, Cotton, Coventry Eagle, Excelsior, Federation, Montgomery, Ok Supreme, Vincent, and Zenith.

Smaller two stroke machines had previously tended to be sidelined by the more glamorous large four strokes in racing circles.¹²⁵

The structure of a typical club depended upon its aims and functions. In order that it would function correctly, the club needed a hierarchy of officials. Theoretically each had a particular role, although the demarcation of these roles was often blurred. These were divided into two main categories, catering for sporting and social events, as well as the general administrative management of the club. Usually, the top rank within the club was the president, whose main task was as a form of ambassador representing the club and a figurehead. A person of some standing within society was often chosen for such a job. This, under certain circumstances could ease relations between the club and the rest of society.¹²⁶ Sometimes, but not always, the president could be a clergyman, such as the Reverend E. H. Stenning of the Manx MCC, or Reverend E. Bruce-Cornforth of the Waterloo & District MC & LCC.¹²⁷ Those involved in civic duties, were also chosen for this position. Alderman Gleave was president of Portsmouth MC, whilst Mayor Alderman G. E. Caine was vice-president of Rotherham & District MC. Men of rank within the military could also attain the foremost position in club life. The Norbury MC held Captain R. Twelvetrees as its president, whilst Brigadier General O. C. Herbert CMG MC held this post within the North Hants MC. The privilege of a knighthood could also be of use in obtaining presidential rank. Sir A. W. Lambert, of Newcastle & District MCC, held this position. Sir Henry Birkin was vice-president of The Public Schools MC. Sir Harry Bowden, Bart. held the chair of The Raleigh MCC. Most famously, Sir Malcolm Campbell was president of Wembley & District MC. Academia's motorcyclists held

¹²⁵ <http://www.btsc.btinternet.co.uk/history.html>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007).

¹²⁶ See the legal system's and establishment's attitudes in other chapters.

¹²⁷ Perhaps the most famous motorcycling cleric was Canon Basil H. Davis (*Ixion of The Motor Cycle*). It is not known if he was ever the president of a club, as his private life is not well documented.

amongst their number, Professor A. M. Lowe, who held high official status in the ACU, as well as presidentship of The British Two-Stroke Club, and the West Middlesex Amateur MCC. The Countess of Drogheda presided over The London Ladies MC.¹²⁸ The Duke of Westminster was president of the Chester Motor Club.¹²⁹

Next in order of importance within the club, was its honorary secretary. According to *The Motor Cycle*, the ideal secretary should be, 'a man of "pushful" yet unobtrusive manner... far-sighted, tactful, and with a large capacity for hard work in his spare time.'¹³⁰ The honorary secretary's job was the hardest within the club as it was their responsibility to keep it running efficiently, organising membership, events co-ordinating, as well as diplomatic inter-club matters. In some circumstances, 'It was he who thought out ideas, literally ran his committee, and organised everything to perfection.'¹³¹ An honorary treasurer dealt with matters of finance within the club, such as subscriptions and event funding. If the club was to organise sporting events, such as trials, grasstracks, or rallies, officials were elected to organise them on an ad hoc basis. It was considered important that such people exercised tact coupled with firmness in their dealings with club members and other clubs. One journal noted that a 'lack of discipline has brought more than one club down, and while a military manner will inevitably lead to trouble, yet people have to be made to understand that rules must be kept.'¹³² A good club was composed of a hard core of enthusiastic committee members, from which the rank and file could be inspired, and social and sporting events be successfully organised.

¹²⁸ See club database in appendices. Such posts were not usually intended for life.

¹²⁹ See club database.

¹³⁰ *The Motor Cycle* Apr 23rd 1931 p. 615.

¹³¹ *The Motor Cycle*, Apr 23rd 1931 p.615.

¹³² *The Motor Cyclist Review* Nov 1925 p.146.

For a motorcycle club to come into existence, there has to be a perceived need for one. Humanity is usually gregarious in nature, especially when common interests are in evidence. It is often beneficial and more entertaining if such interests are shared via the institution of a club.¹³³ Motorcyclists are no exception. When this need has been established, certain procedures bring the new club into existence. The motorcycling press was of help here, publishing several articles during the period relating to club formation and organisation. *The Motor Cyclist Review* advised its readers in this way in 1925.¹³⁴ A new club might be formed for two main reasons. Firstly, in an area where long established clubs already existed, but they had become too cliquey or unenthusiastic to new ideas, a fresh start was perceived to be required. Secondly, where an area of sporting or social interest was not being covered, and there was space and enthusiasm for it, a new style of club could be founded. Motorcyclists intending to form new clubs were advised firstly to find out whether other riders would be interested, and not merely to confine their initial membership to close acquaintances. Local dealers were consulted to gauge prospective interest, and matters of subscriptions and club activities were to be considered. It was felt by the magazine that usually clubs should concentrate on either the sporting or social side of the pastime, as clubs, which excelled in both, were rare. This could lead to disappointment within the membership. A preliminary meeting was to be called, during which, '... officers may be elected, the rules passed, and a beginning made with a programme... of events. The ACU could be contacted to provide a set of 'model club rules.'¹³⁵ Membership of this organisation was deemed necessary in all cases apart from very small clubs devoted purely to social activities. The accompanying database reveals that this advice was not always taken. Of the 385 clubs, 76 were not affiliated to the ACU.

¹³³ The complex set of interactions coinciding with concepts of masculinity inherent in such organisations has been explored in Roper, M., and Tosh, J., (eds), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800*. (London: Routledge, 1991).

¹³⁴ *The Motor Cyclist Review* Nov 1925 p.144.

¹³⁵ *The Motor Cyclists Review*, Nov 1925 p. 144.

Amongst these, several could not be considered to be small.¹³⁶ Regarding committee composition, readers were advised not to compose it completely from members of the motorcycling trade, to ‘... prevent the amateur element of the club from being swamped...’

¹³⁷ The preliminary meeting was undertaken, by firstly appointing the chairman. A club name was to be proposed, seconded and agreed upon. Then the remainder of the committee were to be elected in the usual democratic manner. Votes were to be counted by two scrutineers, appointed by the chairman. Club rules were to be decided upon, as were subscription fees, stated at being usually 10s 6d per year. This figure could be higher, depending upon the lavishness of the club premises, and the extent to which they catered for the members needs.¹³⁸ A club badge or pendant would be discussed, as would a preliminary agenda of club outings and events.¹³⁹ This member of the motorcycling press, not surprisingly advised the new club to advertise its presence in the relevant magazine as soon as possible.

Motorcycle clubs could be loosely described as friendly societies. These organisations were set up to cater for the social welfare needs of their members and were most popular in times previous to the setting up of the Welfare State being also means by which members could have access to funds in times of financial need.¹⁴⁰ In a purely pro-social function, motorcycle clubs allowed their members, through regular subscriptions, to be

¹³⁶ See club database in appendices. For example, The Association of Pioneer Motorcyclists, The Association of Non-Affiliated Clubs, and The Post Office Engineers.

¹³⁷ *The Motor Cyclists Review*, Nov 1925 p.146.

¹³⁸ The writer in *The Motor Cyclists Review* Nov 1925 cited a club with a membership of 100 and a 2 guinea fee. It had ‘an excellent clubroom, where meals are provided, and so on.’

¹³⁹ *Motor Cycling*, Mar 23rd 1927 p. 564.

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.friendlysocieties.co.uk/history.htm>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007). Prior to the Welfare State they were often the only way a working person had to receive help in times of ill health, or old age. In the days when having no income normally meant a life of begging or living in the poorhouse the importance of Friendly Societies to their members and the tremendous social service they provided cannot be over stated.

involved in activities, which they might not otherwise be able to afford. This is best defined in *The Friendly Societies Act 1992*:

‘An incorporated friendly society may include among its purposes the carrying on of any social or benevolent activity which is not inconsistent with the other purposes of the society.’¹⁴¹

These activities were of both a sporting or social nature, and ranged from social events such as dances and the annual general meeting to sporting activities such as trials, races, or hillclimbs. It is possible that some members of clubs were aware of this legal definition, there often being well educated committee members, but it is doubtful whether clubs were set up solely as a means of welfare support for their members. The ownership of a motorcycle meant that the owner had initially to possess the necessary funds in excess of those required for the basic needs of the owner and his or her family.

One journal considered that the ideal situation regarding motorcycle clubs at this time was that they should appeal to the majority of riders.¹⁴² If this had been the case, then clubs must by necessity have been either, much larger and unwieldy or have been far greater in number. Here, it is again necessary to cite the database of clubs, which has been compiled to calculate an approximate figure for members nationally at this time. The number of clubs found to be in correspondence with *The Motor Cycle* during 1932 was 385. If a figure of 100 members per club is surmised, which is conservative because the database reveals that for instance, Darlington motor club had 112 members and Middlesborough 332, then about 38,000 motorcyclists were involved in clubs, out of a total of over 560,000

¹⁴¹ Great Britain. *Friendly Societies Act 1992: Elizabeth II. Chapter 40 part II 10-(1)*. (1992) London: The Stationery Office.

¹⁴² *The Motor Cyclist Review*, Feb 1929 p.362.

solo motorcycles, sidecar combinations and tricycles registered.¹⁴³ As it was sometimes acceptable for motorcar drivers to be club members, then it appears that quite a small proportion of motorcyclists were in clubs. An attempt at analysing this apparent lack of interest in club membership was made in an article in a 1929 edition of *The Motor Cyclist's Review*. It was highly critical claiming for instance that there was a general lack of interest amongst riders in the writer's, (unidentified) city, which he claimed was '...one of the largest outside London.' Amongst a total of several thousand riders, only 150 were club members.¹⁴⁴ Paradoxically, It was claimed that an over-emphasis on sporting events was another reason why many riders shunned club life, yet the very act of riding a motorcycle with any degree of skill was considered to be a form of sport in itself.¹⁴⁵ The writer claimed that *cliques* existed in many clubs, which treated new or prospective members with disdain, and was another reason for scarcity of membership. Another paradox lay in the writer's claim that a rider was less likely to be able to fit into a large club than one with a smaller membership. Social functions were, it was claimed often set aside in favour of sporting activities, to the extent that some clubs had no regular venue or clubroom. Motorcycling is often a solitary occupation and can appeal to members of society who are fond of their own company. Can it be that the reason for this apparent lack in relative numbers of clubs and club members, can stem from this need for solitude, despite the fact that people do form associations with others of similar interests, in other spheres? Perhaps the majority of motorcycles were utilitarian devices often used primarily as transport to work, and whose owners had no intention of becoming more engrossed in the pursuit than was necessary, and whose finances did not stretch to membership of such organizations.

¹⁴³ Koerner, S., 'Four Wheels Good...' in Thoms, D., Holden L., and Claydon, T., *The Motor Car & Popular Culture in the 20th Century*, p.171. These are figures for 1933: 397,328 solo motorcycles of all capacities, and 165,328 sidecar combinations and tricycles.

¹⁴⁴ *The Motor Cyclist Review*, Feb 1929 p.362.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Motorcycling clubs as well as individual riders came in for a lot of criticism in the press, during this period. This stemmed mainly from private individuals' opposition towards their sporting activities. Concern was expressed regarding the noise and disruption caused by large groups of motorcyclists, who converged upon parts of the country, to take part in trials, rallies and other sporting events. Complaints about motorcycles mainly came in two categories. These centred upon the disruption of the environment, caused by sporting events, and noise caused by such events and by individual riders. 'KKK' suggested a solution to the first part of the problem, in a 1932 edition of *Motor Cycling*. Trials attracted large numbers of riders, and if numbers could be kept to a minimum, then 'John Citizen' would have less cause for complaint, as to the general public, large groups of motorcyclists were seen to be 'racing.'¹⁴⁶ The historian H.A.L. Fisher was incensed enough to write a letter to *The Times* in 1934 when the idyll of his Surrey countryside life was disrupted one Sunday morning, due to:

'A great column of tri-cars and motorcycles, some with, others without, sidecars, came rushing down with a hideous screech. Over two hours passed before the path was clear of the invaders. The sweet air was tainted with petrol, but, perhaps because there were no silencers, there were also no deaths.'¹⁴⁷

In his autobiographical work, the motorcyclist Roy K. Battson illustrated the other side of the story. Referring to the 1920s when the motorcycle's position as the most prolific form of personal motorised transport was in the process of being surpassed by the motorcar.

Battson stresses the problems caused by the 'tin can' invasion:

¹⁴⁶ *Motor Cycling* Jun 29th 1932.

¹⁴⁷ *The Times* Sept 25th 1934 p.15. The National Archives at Kew hold a complaint regarding the nuisance caused by motorcyclists carrying out speed tests and racing on sands at Littlestone on Sea in 1914. Item: Board of Trade Harbour Department: Correspondence and Papers. MT 10/1740/.

‘But now, the Golden Decade was drawing to its close, and the long shadow of Messrs. Morris, Ford and Austin was falling across the land. Each weekend, more and more of the little painted tin boxes crowded in their Gadarene rush to the coast; each week-end, there were fewer and fewer motorcyclists among the Austin Sevens and Morris Eights. No longer could you pull in at a field gate and lean there with a peaceful cigarette. If there were not one there already, you were soon joined by a tin box, complete with parents and (it seemed) at least fifty repulsive children, who rushed, screaming into the cornfields, kicking down the stooks stacked so patiently by the harvesters... while their equally regrettable and Pill-less mothers spread cloths and litter in approximately equal quantities; though few, fortunately, could foresee the days to come, when the insensate vomit of the car factories and the stinking diesel lorries would ruin the countryside for ever, and slaughter or maim, like some blood sacrifice to the Moloch of the industry, the people by the tens of thousands; which was just as well.’¹⁴⁸

This is an example of the conflict of interests, which occurred when motor vehicles invaded the countryside, a theme that has been explored by Sean O’Connell.¹⁴⁹

Motorcyclists and other motorists were privileged in that they, through their mode of transport, could explore parts of the country, which had hitherto been left undisturbed. The privilege was also open to a lesser extent, to walkers, hikers, ramblers, and cyclists, in what has been called ‘... the rediscovery of the countryside.’¹⁵⁰ The weekend practice of ‘getting away from it all’ was a habit sometimes followed by the town dweller during this period, if time and work permitted. To the indigenous population of the countryside, as well as those privileged to be able to commute to the towns, this weekly intrusion of noisy and dirty machinery was often unbearable. Letters to *The Times* were often an outlet, by which such people of a higher social class might vent their spleen. In 1932 a correspondent who styled him (or herself) *East Anglian* complained that despite a warning from the Minister of Transport of two years previous, regarding the use of illegal silencing, which initially had resulted in many prosecutions, this was no longer the case. Such a practice did not prevent most motorists from flouting the law, because there was no

¹⁴⁸ Battson, R. K., *The Land Beyond the Ridge*. (Cambridge: Goose & Son, 1974). p.46.

¹⁴⁹ O’Connell, S., *The Car...* chapter 5.

¹⁵⁰ Stevenson, J., *British Society, 1914–45*. (London: Penguin, 1990) p.292.

accepted means of deciding the threshold level of what constituted unacceptable noise.¹⁵¹

'KKK' stressed the importance of motorcyclists doing everything in their power not to upset the rural population as more restrictive legislation might result. Regarding the general appearance of riders in such events, the Ashton Stamford Motor Club criticised those taking part in their trials. It was felt that if the rider put up an appearance of being less scruffy, it would help to, '...kill prejudice against motorcycles and we who ride them.'¹⁵²

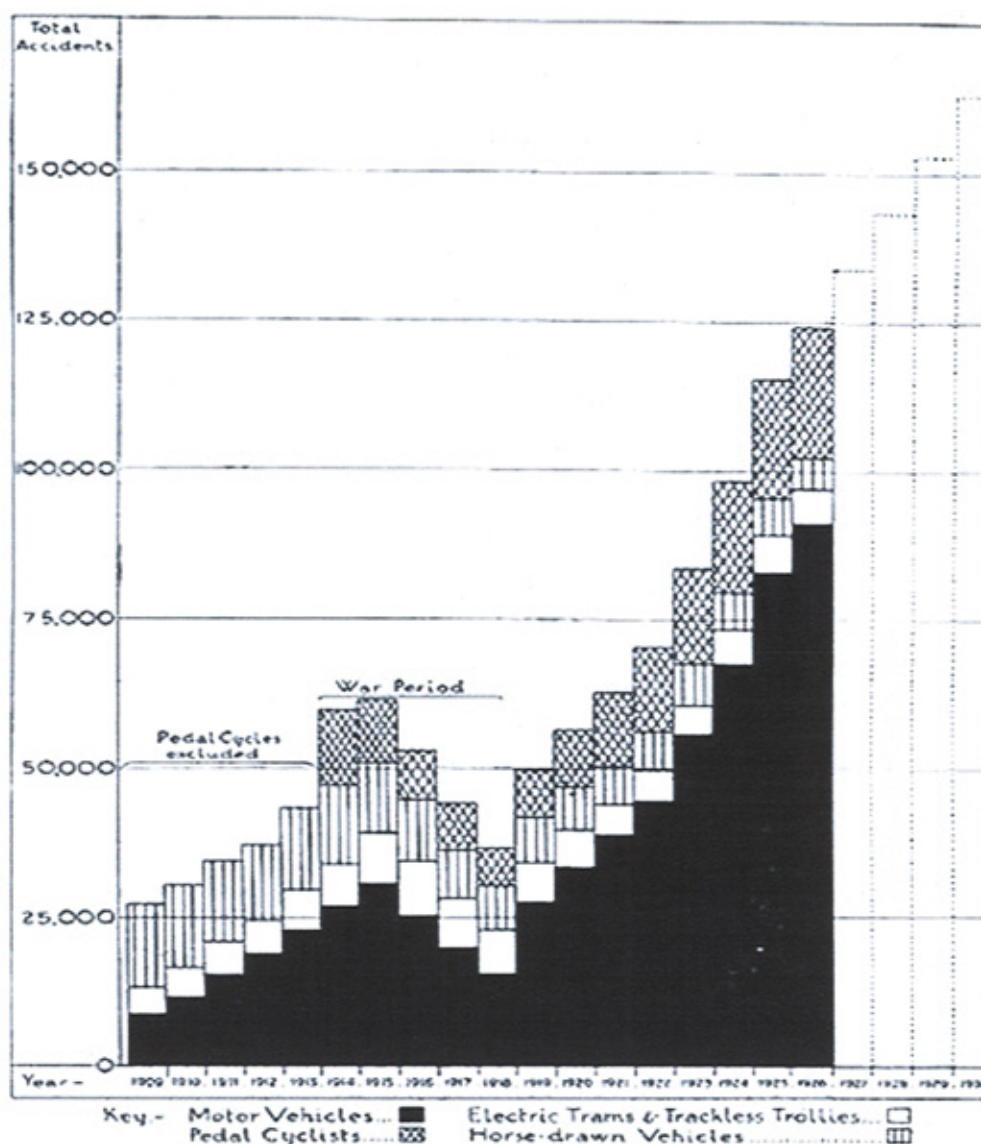
Such prejudice came from two main sources during this period. There were those whose concern mainly lay in the protection of the rural environment from damage caused by motor vehicles, and secondly, those concerned with the prevention of accidents. They were epitomised in two main bodies, the National Safety First Association, [NSFA] and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, [CPRE].¹⁵³ The Association was formed due to the great increase of traffic accidents after the First World War as the graph shows:

¹⁵¹ *The Times* Jun 27th 1932 p.13. This correspondent's letter was answered by a Mr. Morley of Lechdale Gloucestershire, on July 4th, who considered that 'old motorcycles are bought just for the noise' whilst a Mr Jones, blamed fast riders on new machines, 'as old ones couldn't produce the power' on the following day.

¹⁵² *Motor Cycling* Jul 13th 1932. This following a comment made by a spectator as to whether a trial was a competition for the dirtiest rider.

¹⁵³ <http://www.rosfa.com/history/1920s.htm>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007). The NSFA, now known as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, was formed in 1923. It was an amalgamation of previously formed bodies, designed to bring to the attention of government bodies the national scale of the problem of accidents. Although concerned with other safety aspects such as in mining and on the railways, the association was also concerned with traffic accidents.

Table 2.1. *Graph showing traffic accidents.*



The yearly increase in the number of street accidents is well illustrated in the diagram above.

Source: <http://www.rosipa.com/history/1920s.htm> (Accessed: 18 April 2007).

In 1927 the Road Fellowship League was set up, where its members were to sign a pledge, to uphold its code, which covered walking, cycling, horse driving and motor vehicle operating:

‘When Riding or Driving a Motor Vehicle: Keep on guard against the errors of others. Regulate speed according to all the circumstances. Exercise extra caution at road

junctions. Keep well to the proper side of the road. Overtake only with safety. Use horn with discretion and consideration. Give signals correctly, clearly, and in ample time. Change direction or pace without inconveniencing others. Conform suitably to the warning signals of other road users. Leave vehicle only when no-one will be inconvenienced. Maintain vehicle in safe mechanical condition. Drive only when physically fit to do so. Acknowledge the courtesy of others.¹⁵⁴

Despite this apparent concern for the regulation and control of motor vehicles, the NSFA was partly controlled by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, and it claimed that in the majority of cases accidents were not the fault of the motorist.¹⁵⁵ The CPRE held no allegiance to the motor industry. It was formed in 1926, and was primarily concerned with co-ordinating the efforts of ‘...many national associations, institutions, and societies, each of which is interested in preserving rural scenery from some special danger...’¹⁵⁶ The organisation was a reactionary movement against the influx of the town into the countryside, both in the emergence of suburbs, and in weekend tourists, and motorists. Motorcycle club activities were anathema to such organisations. One of its main objectives was, ‘To organise concerted action to secure the protection of rural scenery, and of the amenities of country towns and villages from disfigurement or injury.’¹⁵⁷ The society concerned itself with, ‘...the protection of old villages from ruination by incongruous building and from the hideous accompaniments of the vast increase in motor traffic.’¹⁵⁸ In this way the CPRE represented the epitome of anti-modernity, the old against the new, just as much as motorcycling represented the opposite, a new modernist pastime.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.rosipa.com/history/1920s.htm>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007) The association’s influence on the Highway Code, which was first issued in 1931 can be seen here. It sat on the committee, which compiled the code.

¹⁵⁵ Hamer, M., *Wheels Within Wheels: A Study of the Road Lobby*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987). p.32. It claimed in 1928, that 67% of accidents were unavoidable, being due to for instance tramlines or pedestrians.

¹⁵⁶ Williams-Ellis, C., (ed.), *Britain and the Beast*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1937). p.315.

¹⁵⁷ Williams-Ellis, C., (ed.), *Britain and the Beast*, p.317.

¹⁵⁸ *The Guardian* Sep. 3rd 1926.

The sort of motorcycle clubs, which corresponded with contemporary journals and about which the bulk of this work concerns itself appear to be run on entirely civilised lines. There is no hint at any form of anarchic or anti-social behaviour, apart from the occasional sortie en masse out into the countryside, which has been associated with more modern clubs or social groups such as the rockers of the 1950s and 1960s or more outlandish organisations such as the Hells Angels. The origins of such types of motorcycle club lie in the disillusion and disaffection of the post Second World War world, and the emergence of the affluent teenager. This form of motorcycling has been explored in the work of Hunter S. Thompson,¹⁵⁹ Paul Willis¹⁶⁰ and later Suzanne McDonald-Walker.¹⁶¹ Thompson discovered that the Hells Angels were an organisation founded upon a loose knit group of individuals, involved in crime and drug abuse, to finance their lifestyle, with the motorcycle, particularly the Harley Davidson, as a unifying influence, alongside the club 'colours' or badge. Willis saw the 'motor bike boys' as a definite sub-culture, born out of the emergence of the affluent teenager. The machines they rode were an extension of the image they chose to put forward; that of raw brute strength, individuality, and an unwillingness to conform to accepted forms of sport such as team games.¹⁶² McDonald-Walker sees membership of motorcycle clubs as a symptom of social change, which has resulted in the individual's loss of a sense of social belonging. This occurred where 'traditional collectivities, such as class, community or the kinship network...' have to some extent been radically altered or broken down.¹⁶³ As has been said, the First World

¹⁵⁹Thompson, H. S., *Hells Angels*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967). This is the seminal work on the subject, and provides a striking contrast to how motorcycle clubs were run in the inter-war period.

¹⁶⁰ Willis, P., *Profane Culture*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), provides an insight into the motorcycle scene in England in the 1960s and 1970s, where the motorcycle was held to epitomise the teenager's dream of independence and rebellion.

¹⁶¹McDonald-Walker, S., *Bikers: Culture, Politics and Power*. (Oxford: Berg, 2000), provides a contemporary view of a more politically active motorcycle scene.

¹⁶² Willis, P., *Profane Culture*, p.29. 'Their view of the appropriate manly scope of action did not include the wearing of shorts and the obeying of formal rules, nor was athletic ability taken as evidence of masculinity.'

¹⁶³ McDonald-Walker, S., *Bikers...* p.44.

War traumatised the nation, and left the remainder shocked, and for a time, given the right set of circumstances, ready to free themselves from the restrictions of social norms. An important question, which arises from this work, is why did the sort of antisocial, rebellious clubs, which emerged after the Second World War, not appear after the First World War? Was Britain's entire social ethos different during this period? What had changed after 1945, which had not after 1918? The above-mentioned objections to motorcycle trials for instance, were made against events that seem far more civilized than the 'marauding army of Vikings' which were portrayed in the moral panic that resulted from the clashes between the mods and rockers in the sixties.¹⁶⁴ The extent to which the interwar public were prone to such press manipulation is unknown and would warrant further research, as the literature concerning this subject does not cover the interwar period.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to create a picture of the motorcycling club scene in the inter-war period. The evidence suggests that such clubs were important focal points for social and sporting aspects of the pastime, providing a unifying force for an otherwise purely individual pursuit. By this period there was a perceived need, judging by the foundation of organizations such as the British Motor Cycle Association, as discussed in chapter four, for the motorcyclist to become politically minded, due to increasing government interference in transport, via road legislation, and here too clubs provided a focal point for such discussions. Clubs were also used by the industry as a viable propaganda tool through their civilised behaviour, but paradoxically they also provided a source of conflict through their sporting activities, with a certain sector of society, which thought that the countryside should be reserved for the select few. The next chapter will

¹⁶⁴ Cohen, S., *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. (Bungay: Routledge, 1972). p.52.

explore inroads made into accepted forms of behaviour by another sector of society.

Female involvement with motorcycling will be analysed.

Chapter 3: Women and the Motorcycle. Mechanized Emancipation.

In this chapter, the emancipating effect for women of motorcycling will be explored. How women utilized this form of transport will be shown using the available data from contemporary journals, as well as some examples of oral testimony. Definitive evidence regarding the numbers and social class of women riders is unavailable. Instead the chapter will provide a general picture of female motorcycling during this period, and where appropriate examine particular female riders, and show their impact upon the pursuit. It was decided to concentrate upon motorcycling women rather than a more gender diverse approach because this was a hitherto unexplored area and those women involved in the pursuit deserved mention. Also, male involvement in motorcycling has been covered more generally in other chapters of this work. Women's involvement tended to be exceptional and sometimes elitist. They warranted a chapter of their own.

The relevant historiography is found in the specialisation of interwar period gender studies, and more particularly in the literature on the history of sport. This tends to concentrate upon the masculine side of the subject. This oversight is particularly true for motor sports. An investigation of women and motorcycling addresses this imbalance and supplements the existing literature. Female participation in sporting activities has recently come under greater discussion, particularly from feminist writers. For example, the work of Jennifer Hargreaves analysed women's sport, devoting a chapter to the interwar period. Little mention is given regarding female participation in motor sports.¹ Hargreaves' conclusion that an apparent post First World War retreat for feminism occurred as regards

¹ Hargreaves, J., *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports*. (London: Routledge, 1997). p.118. Mention is given to the Honourable Mrs. Victor Bruce a notable motor sportswoman, who began as a motorcyclist, eventually taking part in flying competitions. This exemplifies the well-off high social class woman having the opportunity to indulge in such activities.

work and domesticity is of relevance here, when her stipulation regarding this being in some ways offset by conditions, which, 'stimulated the growth of sports and recreation' is taken into account.² Underlying patterns of inequality based around class, age and gender were in evidence. Hargreaves also found that middle-class or better off working-class women were most likely to be involved in some form of sport. Motorcycling was not a completely male preserve and women could be involved, often in competitive aspects at a high level of competence, given the evidence of contemporary journals. Hargreaves states that in the interwar years some women were considered to be outlandish when they made inroads into male areas of sport, especially in terms of attire, which in turn, 'fed a changing popular consciousness about women's sports.'³ Another writer states that, 'Modern looks developed after the First World War, with the aid of clothing that expressed an ideal of comfort and the possibility of action.'⁴ This was particularly the case for female motorcyclists, who were encouraged in the specialist journals and some other published works, to combine practicality with femininity. Women writing for these journals, regularly advised on the adoption of the correct attire, which in a similar fashion to the above liberated the female, without in some ways making her appear masculine, which was invariably seen to be inappropriate.⁵

Hargreaves states that, 'The intersection of class and gender is central to an analysis of female sports.'⁶ The higher up the social ladder a woman was, the greater the likelihood of being able to take part in some sporting activities and be accepted by her male counterparts. This originated in class differences in attitudes towards sport in schools.

²Ibid, p.112.

³ Ibid, p.118

⁴ Hollander, A., *Seeing Through Clothes*. (New York: Avon, 1980). p.152.

⁵ See in particular, the many articles written by the Debenham sisters and their book, Debenham, N. & B., *Motor-Cycling for Women: A Book for the Lady Driver, Sidecar Passenger, and Pillion Rider*. (Bath: Pitman & Sons, 1928).

⁶ Hargreaves, J., *Sporting Females...* p.120

Middle-class girls had the opportunity to take part in a greater variety of sports than their working class contemporaries. Public and grammar school girls could play cricket, lacrosse, hockey, netball, rounders or tennis. Working-class girls were lucky if they were allotted space for netball, whilst their male classmates might play football or cricket.⁷ There appears to have been a definite discouragement for working class girls to participate in sports. This alongside with the ability to afford machines, and the need to remain in the home when married, may provide part of an answer to why many of the motorcycling sportswomen such as Marjorie Cottle, examined were middle-class or higher. Hargreaves' research leads to the conclusion that middle-class women were brought up to be more competitive. The interwar period saw the development of organised sports associations for women, such as the Women's Cricket Association, or All England Netball Association, both founded in 1926. Equivalent associations for female motorcyclists were comparatively rare. The two most mentioned in the contemporary literature were the London Ladies Motorcycle Club and its Yorkshire equivalent, both of which had a large membership in this period. The apparent dearth of female oriented motorcycle clubs is probably due to the relative scarcity of women riders at least within clubs. Organised leisure activities specifically for women, based around other types of association have been assessed by Claire Langhamer who found them to be generally of the following types. Firstly, church organised clubs designed to promote rational recreation and secondly, educational forms such as night schools. Although no firm assertion can be made, working class girls appear to have attended the former type, whilst evening classes and more specifically, types of enthusiast clubs were joined by middle class women to a larger extent. There was an identifiable middle class pre-occupation with clubbability by

⁷ Ibid, p. 121.

both genders.⁸ This provides a clue regarding the class structure of motorcycle clubs and the particular dominance of well-off committee members. The two above-mentioned female-only clubs in existence during the period both appear from articles in the journals to be run and predominantly joined by middle-class women. The analysis of the activities of female motorcycle riders complimented and added to the research of Langhamer and others.

Despite the common courtesies advised in the specialist press being generally upheld, some form of uneasiness with women riders existed within motorcycle clubs.⁹ This reflected the general feelings of men when what they consider to be their pastime was being infiltrated. This confirms earlier work done by Lowerson, whose analysis of angling clubs of this period found that women rarely joined them. This was because they 'were generally seen as a threat to the significant male-bonding rituals of club and riverbank.'¹⁰ It is likely that a similar camaraderie existed within the male ranks of some motorcycle clubs.

Another opposition to women taking part in sporting activities lay in the dubious and unfounded assertion that it damaged women's health, which has been explored by Hargreaves.¹¹ There were contrary assertions about this regarding motorcycling, with a continuing emphasis of the beneficial affects it had to the health of both genders. Well-entrenched beliefs were being called into question in an effort to maintain the popularity of the sport. This encouragement by some sectors of society to positively promote the claimed benefits of motoring was not confined to two-wheeled transport. A 1910 edition

⁸ Langhamer, C., *Women's Leisure in England, 1920 – 1960*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). p.75.

⁹ See page 120.

¹⁰ Lowerson J., in Mason, T., (ed.), *Sport in Britain: A Social History*. (Cambridge: Faber, 1989). p.31.

¹¹ Hargreaves, J., *Sporting Females...* p.134.

of *Fry's Magazine*, which has been cited by Lowerson, claimed that 'motoring women were held to be free from headaches (and) likely to benefit from open-air adventure.'¹² More general concerns regarding women in sport have been analysed by McKibbin, revealing deeply entrenched opposition to their participation in organised sports. The Football Association for example, banned women from taking part in their matches in 1921, claiming that they exploited women, but that the real reason for keeping it a man's game was because it gave it the social prestige it required to survive.¹³ A similar kind of attitude existed in the organising body of motorcycle sport. The Auto Cycle Union banned women from taking part in speedway or dirt track racing in 1930 ostensibly as a result of a serious accident that occurred. This appears to have been just the excuse the ACU were seeking. Women could compete favourably with men in this and other motorcycle sports. Where speedway differed from other types of riding was its popularity, attracting as it did a mass audience of both riders and non-riders, which was consequently profitable to the organisers. Women riders attracted the crowds. That they were banned is another enigmatic decision typical of the ACU. The most prestigious organisation devoted to motorcycling also saw fit to prohibit female membership. From 1910 the Motor Cycling Club had done this, and this was not to alter until 1946, in recognition of their work done during the Second World War.

Also in her book on women's leisure Claire Langhamer states that, 'The pursuit of the informal illuminates the stage upon which women act.'¹⁴ Therefore, a study of female leisure pursuits will consequently take into account the social and cultural environments where they exist. This is equally relevant when undertaking a study of motorcycling from

¹² Lowerson, J., *Sport and the English Middle Classes*... p.219.

¹³ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures*... p.368. An alternative explanation was on the pretext of the misappropriation of gate receipts from charity matches, in Langhamer, C., *Women's Leisure*... p.82.

¹⁴ Langhamer, C., *Women's Leisure*... p.2.

a woman's perspective. Langhamer states that, 'The nature of leisure within women's lives in twentieth century England can be understood only if attention is paid to a series of contextual frameworks including historical moment, material circumstance, and life-cycle stage.'¹⁵ Female involvement in motorcycling during this period was made possible by the likelihood of similar circumstances, such as being better acquainted (and consequently less likely to be wary of) mechanical technology, due to involvement with it in the First World War as has been stated earlier. Also, the popularity, range and diversity of machines available combined with the more open post war spirit epitomised by the Roaring Twenties are factors in taking up the pursuit by women. As for men, material circumstances continued to dictate mode of transport for women. Although popular across the social classes, specialist journals reveal the most likely female candidate for motorcycling as being mostly young, un-married and middle class. Langhamer's life-cycle stages are of relevance because motorcycling was usually but not always, taken up by the young. It is likely that the constraints of family life and the onset of age apply equally with the pursuit as with other sports. She described one of the traits of the modern girl of the interwar period, with reference to for example the *Manchester Evening News* as having, 'broken into motoring.'¹⁶ Some women were apparently increasingly independent in outlook in other areas of sport and adventure pursuits. In both the popular motorcycling journals and in recorded interviews, female motorcyclists are found to display these tendencies. These traits are not apparently confined to the sometimes, but not always middle class 'flapper.' As Langhamer notes, a certain independence of spirit was apparent amongst the Lancashire mill-girls.¹⁷ Although female motorcyclists were in a minority it is possible that some came from this sector of society.

¹⁵ Ibid. p.49.

¹⁶ Ibid p.55

¹⁷ Ibid, p.53

Kathleen McCrone's work on the physical emancipation of women concludes that, before the interwar period, the more radically feminist portion of the female population, the Suffragettes, attacked some sporting activities because they assumed them to be legitimate male-dominated targets for aggressive tactics for their cause, rather than attempting to undermine these assumptions by taking part in the sport.¹⁸ There were organisations devoted to sport and women's suffrage, for instance, the Gymnastic Teachers Suffrage Society. Female motorcyclists were not noted for their political feminism. Instead, the character of perhaps the most famous of them, Marjorie Cottle was 'like a school mistress,'¹⁹ behaving as such to her female associates and probably towards some of her more flippant male ones. The ideal of behaviour of the female motorcycling competitor of the interwar period was based upon competing on equal terms with men, rather than with a feminist agenda. The extent to which sport continued to be a 'potent sign of male sexuality and power,'²⁰ as McCrone claims it to have been prior to the First World War, is debateable, mainly because the conflict had shown that women could successfully infiltrate areas of male hegemony. Motorcycling primarily involved controlling technology in a particularly potent, vibrant, 'masculine' form. Female riders who demonstrated such control exceeded radical feminist ideals perhaps without realising.

If motorcycling can be said to be a masculine pastime, then female motorcyclists represent an incursion into what some sociologists refer to as hegemonic or dominant forms of masculinity.²¹ Society's demands that the male behave in certain ways such as being the

¹⁸ McCrone, K. E., *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870 – 1914*. (London: Routledge, 1988). p.277.

¹⁹ Respondent 10.

²⁰ McCrone, K. E., *Sport...* p.285

²¹ Wajcman, J., *Feminism Confronts Technology*. (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991). p.143. <http://www.xyonline.net/Heteromensexuality.shtml> (Accessed: 18 April

breadwinner, protector of the family and indulger in dangerous activities in order that they would be defined as masculine is the essence of this theory. As will be explored below, women during this period were still generally expected to take a 'back seat' in society. Riding a motorcycle placed them often physically on the front seat of the machine, and in a sense in charge of their destinies. Bob Connell, the Australian sociologist cited in Wajcman, associates the concept of hegemonic masculinity with aggressiveness, the capacity for violence and willingness to take part in hazardous processes. The danger, excitement, and mechanics usually associated with the motorcycle, allows motorcycling to fit into the theory. Whether the motorcycle evoked as many powerful emotions and sensual delights in women, as machinery in general have been claimed to evoke in men, is an important question.²² A horse often provides such sensual experiences for the adolescent girl. Here an odd association occurs, as it is common for motorcycles, and their riders, (not drivers, as for cars) to be referred to in equestrian terms. A machine is a 'mount,' the rider goes for a 'ride' (not a drive,) an owner can refer to his collection of machines as 'a stable', the seat being a saddle, and a passenger 'rides pillion,' carrying luggage in 'saddle bags'. Motorcycles in some psychological way, were a replacement for the horse, as well as a more practical means of transport, in terms of durability and maintenance, as is seen in chapter one. By the inter-war period, through increased complexity and reliability, motorcycles had risen above their humble beginnings as bicycles with engines attached, becoming a motorised replacement for the horse, which a bicycle never was. Their mechanical reliability, a result of continuing engine, electrical and other aspects of design development, which had been boosted by war requirements meant that they would attract more women riders, as it was sometimes considered

2007) The key qualities required to "be a man" are that men be strong, unemotional, heterosexual, in control and aggressive. Hegemonic masculinity is based on the subordination of women, and also on hierarchies among men themselves.

²² Wajcman, J., *Feminism...* p.145.

unladylike in some sectors of society, (and this was important at the time) to be involved in tinkering with engines. It is the purpose of this chapter to explore the ways women were emancipated by the motorcycle, to find out what place women had within motorcycling, their social class, how they felt about the pursuit, and how men felt about women riders.

The immediate post First World War period found many women in a position where they had been able to take part in many areas of social and economic activity, which had previously been restricted to men. Due to the need to help with the war effort, women had volunteered their services, and had been able to drive public transport vehicles, such as buses, trams and trains, also being involved in many types of industrial production, as well as their more traditional roles, such as the caring professions. Several women were employed by the Air Force and other services as motorcyclists.²³ When the war ended, women were forced to relinquish many of these freedoms to allow the returning men to regain their former roles in industry and other parts of the economy. These urges were strengthened by the economic slump that occurred during 1920.²⁴ Nevertheless, many women had gained valuable lessons in how to handle technology, and a return to home-based life must have been frustrating to many. A possible outlet for this frustration might have been taking up the pursuit of motorcycling. Women's experience varied from trade to trade. Munitions workers were soon laid off as were many female railway workers, although, and relevant to this work, some were kept on as delivery workers, especially for small firms, eager to keep a familiar face.²⁵

²³ Braybon, G., & Summerfield, P., *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars*. (London: Pandora, 1987). p.72.

²⁴ Braybon G., & Summerfield, P., *Out of the Cage*...p.125.

²⁵ Ibid p.120.

In return for their contribution to the war effort and as a result of pressure from feminist organizations, women were given a partial franchise in 1918. This not only increased their political power, but also might have contributed to an increase in an independent attitude in some sectors of the female population. Women were still usually expected to remain home based and mainly concerned with looking after the house and children. According to some academics the evidence does not suggest that wars led to steady advancement towards the emancipation of women, or that they were spectacular gains followed by crashing losses. There were gains but also an 'undertow,' pulling women back and an emphasis that change was temporary.²⁶ The amount of legislation concerning women, regarding sex, legitimacy, marriage, and the raising of children which was passed during the inter-war period, emphasises a gradual release from the bond of hearth and home, which gave many of them more time for leisure activities.²⁷ The subject of women's leisure has recently come under closer scrutiny by academics, particularly concerning women of lower middle class and working class and how they managed to juggle the responsibilities of home life with recreational pursuits.²⁸

One of the more positive outcomes of the First World War was that it gave a minority of women the chance to become acquainted with transport technology to a similar extent as most men. This phenomenon came into conflict with some earlier ideas expressed by Ruskin during his *Sesame and Lilies* lectures. This radical Victorian thinker but social conservative, considered there to be a distinction between the sexes in terms of the understanding of technology:

²⁶ Ibid, p.281.

²⁷ Holtby, W., *Women and a Changing Civilisation*. (Chicago: Cassandra Editions, 1978). p.198. For example, there were laws raising the age of consent in indecent assault, from 13 to 16, a law forbidding the sale of intoxicating liquor to those under 18, laws enforcing allowances to widows, orphans, illegitimate children, and others protecting women and children from exploitation in the field of work.

²⁸ Langhamer, C., *Women's Leisure...* is most pertinent to this work, particularly chapter 3 which analyses young women's pursuits.

‘... a man ought to know any language or science he learns, thoroughly – while a woman ought to know the same language, or science, only so far as may enable her to sympathize in her husband’s pleasures, and in those of his friends.’²⁹

This line of thinking remained embedded in some circles of society during the interwar period, and found expression in some opposition to women riders, in letters to the journals, some of which will be explored below. The most widely available, cheapest, and most used form of motorised technology at this time was the motorcycle. Motorcycles were strongly associated with freedom of movement. The ownership and use of them allowed access to places to which the user was hitherto restricted. Place a woman on a motorcycle and she becomes an icon of freedom, which was especially poignant in the time in question. The female solo motorcyclist represented emancipation as well as a possible threat to the male status quo and ego when for instance they took part in and sometimes won sporting events. The effect such a phenomenon had upon a paternalistic society, and what opposition and encouragement the female rider got from male riders and men in general, as well as from the motorcycle industry and other women, is a subject worthy of discussion. Growing familiarity with and knowledge of the workings of a motorcycle represent an ideal example of the empowerment of women during this period. To be a female motorcyclist during this period was in effect to oppose ingrained prejudices and assumptions regarding a woman’s place in society. It is therefore unsurprising that it was often impossible for the female rider to pursue her interest in the same way as the male, without appearing to be outrageous, as will be seen below.

²⁹ Ruskin, J., *Sesame and Lilies. Lecture II. Lilies: Of Queens’ Gardens*. (London: Smith Elder, 1865). 74. <http://www.bartleby.com/28/7.html>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007).

An earlier chapter proposed that women constituted approximately 3.4% of the motorcycling population in 1929.³⁰ Examples of actual registrations of motorcycles by women have been found in documents held at Durham County Records Office for the Darlington area in 1920.³¹ There were 136 machines registered for the first time in this town in this year, all of the owners being male. Just outside the town two women registered machines.³² As records are scarce, it is not known how many women owned motorcycles in Darlington at this time although the register shows that women had registered two larger machines in the previous year.³³

The prospective female motorcyclist of the inter-war period had many more hurdles to surmount than the modern woman. One of the great advocates of feminism of the period Winifred Holtby, claimed that there still existed a deeply rooted inferiority-superiority ratio between girls and boys.³⁴ The picture of the man as bravely striding forward to conquer new worlds, whilst being followed by the woman, with babe in arms, was she wrote, ‘...imprinted deeply upon the racial imagination.’³⁵ This image ties in strongly with the picture of the motorcyclist, as it was still an adventurous pursuit, being mainly, but by no means an entirely male pastime. The purchase of a motorcycle required an adequate income or savings no matter the gender of the purchaser. Women between the wars would have had to be of a relatively high social class if they were to buy a motorcycle without the co-operation of their male family members, unless they happened upon some fortune, by way of inheritance or other means. The majority of women during this period spent

³⁰ See page 32.

³¹ Durham County Records Office, Da/cs 2/22 & 2/23.

³² Jane Ellis Wilding and Mabel Gertrude Boyes Odell, both of High Coniscliffe, both purchased ABC Scootamotas in this year. Reg. numbers HN1257 and HN1270. Perhaps they were acquainted.

³³ Margery Wordell of 4 Harewood Grove, registered a 3 ½ hp Rudge Multi HN1046 in 05/06/19 and Margaret Annie Howe of ‘Brooklands’ Hazel Avenue, registered a 2 ¼ hp Levis, HN1057 on 19/06/19.

³⁴ Holtby, W., *Women...* p.98.

³⁵ Holtby, W., *Women...* p.98. Holtby later (p99) gives a brief contemporary image of motorcycles in Oxford, being out of the reach of women. ‘The motor-cycles that snort and thunder down the Iffley Road... are the reserve of the male undergraduate.’

their lives in some kind of family environment, or were destined for married life. Until then, a woman might have an income, but it was usually expected that she leave her employment, whatever her social class, upon marriage. If she did remain in work, it was either because she had attained a sufficient degree of status, or she was involved in a type of manual work considered suitable for women such as taking in washing. It was considered proper that her job was to raise children and look after the needs of her husband.³⁶

This concept of having to leave work upon marriage needs to be taken into consideration in any analysis of the demography of women motorcyclists. It permeated many sectors of society, including the BBC who despite a memo in 1928 in favour of allowing married women to continue working, relented four years later, declaring that such a practice was ‘...taking jobs from single women who had no other means of support.’³⁷ Men were expected to support their wives. Women were expected in most households to be supported. It was rarely possible for such women to save money for a motorcycle, and even more rare for their female offspring to do so. Employment and marital status are important factors in female motorcycle ownership, and it must be noted that in 1921, 36.5% of over 15 years old women were spinsters, whilst by 1931, single women constituted 51% of female workers over 35 years old.³⁸ *Motor Cycling* in 1932 claimed that, ‘In most cases, it is only the edict of a stern parent that prevents Miss 1932 from taking delivery of a current model.’³⁹ The writer claimed that opposition could be

³⁶ Holdsworth, A., *Out of the Dolls House: The Story of Women in the Twentieth Century*. (London: BBC Books, 1988). p.16.

³⁷ Holdsworth, A., *Out of the Dolls House...* p.72.

³⁸ Tinkler, P., ‘Women and Popular Culture’ in Purvis, J., (ed.), *Women’s History: Britain 1850 – 1945, An Introduction*. (London: University College Press, 1995). p.143.

³⁹ *Motor Cycling*, Apr 13th 1932, p.741.

successfully removed by constant pro-motorcycling propaganda. These statements were directed at young women of at least a middle class background, with independent ideas.

Previously to this, *Cylinda* of *The Motor Cyclist Review*, mentions a comment made by a member of the trade, who claimed that the majority of female motorcyclists were professional women, whose occupations took up all their time, and they did not wish to waste it ‘tinkering’ with their machines.⁴⁰ Simplicity and ease of maintenance were major selling points for machines designed for women. *Cylinda*, reviewing the new ‘baby’ machines which came on the market in late 1928 emphasised this claiming that, ‘There is absolutely nothing to go wrong with them,’ and they, ‘...take away any worry from the non-mechanical mind.’⁴¹ They were priced at between twenty and thirty pounds. This represented approximately half a year’s wages for many women in employment:

Table 3.1. *Average Weekly Earnings, October 24th, 1931.*

Industry	Males		Females	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
Industry	52	6	27	7
Sheet metal	53	5	26	2
Tailoring	61	1	29	3
Dressmaking	57	6	28	9

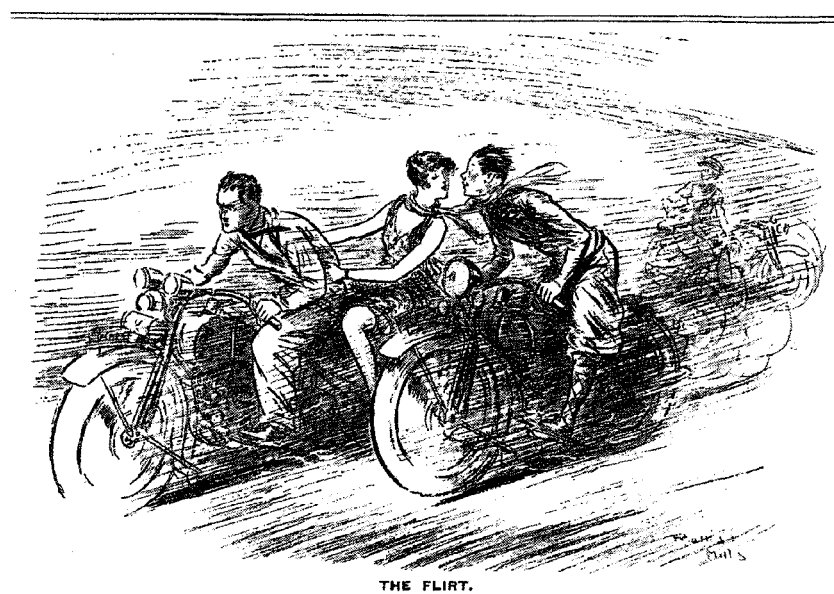
Source: Deane, P., (Ed.), *History in our Hands: A Critical Anthology of Writings on Literature and Politics from the 1930s*. (London: Leicester University Press, 1998). p.262.

⁴⁰ *The Motor Cyclist Review*, Oct 1928 p.187.

⁴¹ *The Motor Cyclist Review* Dec 1928 p.299.

The ownership of a motorcycle by working class women was hampered by at least one major obstacle. Women in this sector of society, if they worked at all, received about half as much in wages as men did for the same sort of work. Also, a working class women's housekeeping job was more labour intensive, the labouring classes being less able to afford luxuries such as electric irons or washing machines. Consequently, if they were fortunate to be able to have use of a motorcycle, it was usual for the majority of women riders from this sector of society to ride pillion, on the 'Flapper Bracket' or in the sidecar, either as a means of socialising with a prospective husband, or in the case of the married woman, as part of a family unit. These facts emphasise the idea of an independent female motorcyclist as being an exception to the rule in motoring circles and more broadly, in inter-war society. In the case of the unmarried sidecar-travelling woman, questions must be raised regarding the reputations of such women, and whether any distinction was found between them and their car using peers. *Punch* saw fit to portray women pillions as being flirtatious:

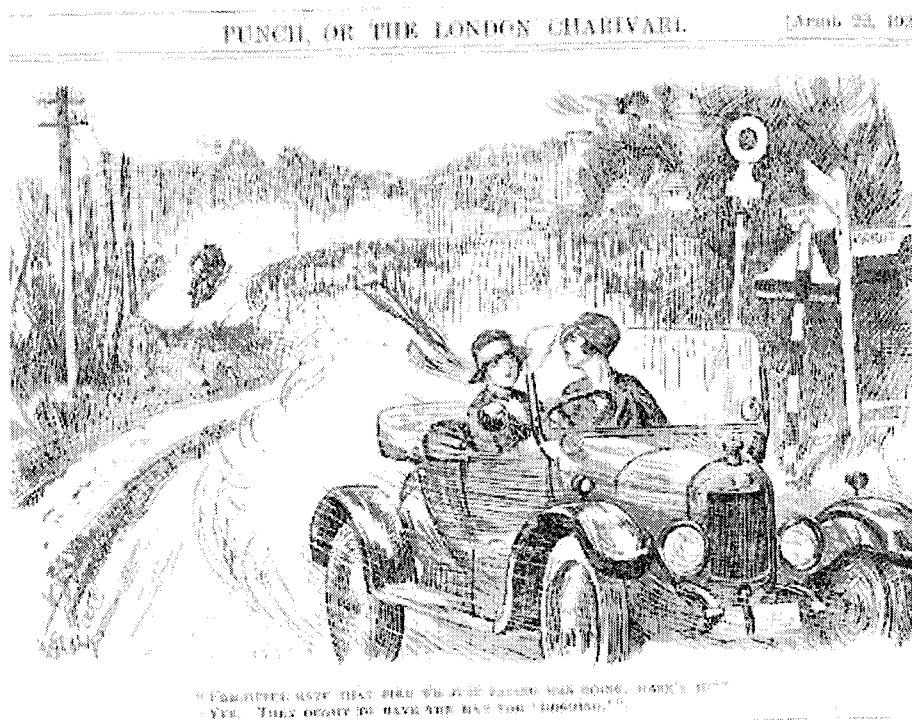
Fig. 3.1. *The Flirt.*



Source: *Punch, or The London Charivari*, 16th July 1930, p.60.

Whilst the same magazine portrayed the female car driver as being none-the-less racy but more in control:

Fig. 3.2. *The more affluent?*



Source: *Punch or the London Charivari* April 22nd 1925 p.432.

The higher up the social scale a woman was, the more likely that she would be able or willing to own some form of motorised transport.⁴² As motorcycles were usually cheaper than cars, the middle class woman would be more able to afford one. This gives some

⁴² The American version of this phenomenon has been explored in Sharff, V., *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age*. (New York: Free Press, 1992). pp.18 - 22 & 68 - 69.

insight into the social class of the female rider. In the 1920s the *Evening Standard* noted this willingness. Business girls were buying motorcycles in order that they could go off, '... to a country home for the weekend.'⁴³ It was also noted elsewhere, that such women would, '... take their parents for a spin in the sidecar.'⁴⁴ In this way, the doubly 'subordinate' female offspring could radically upturn her role, by in a sense taking charge of the destiny and safety of her parents.⁴⁵

Another early example of the independent woman is found in an attempt at promoting the benefits of motorcycling to this sector of society in a 1915 edition of *The Motor Cycle* in which a young stenographer commuted to and from work on a small Levis two-stroke machine. In her adventures, the writer emphasises the utility and pleasurable aspects of ownership, as well as the courtesy and help she found when the inevitable breakdowns required roadside assistance.⁴⁶ The writer is stereotypically a single female in a white-collar profession. An exceptional woman rider provides a contrast to this situation in a post First World War edition of *Motor Cycling*. It was considered in some circles that a woman's frame was not built to take the punishment of riding motorcycles on contemporary road surfaces.⁴⁷ This claim was disproved in the article in which a Mrs. Fletcher delivered Douglas machines from their Bristol works to London customers. This conjectured physical frailty, was an example of paternalist restrictions upon the freedom of women. These deliveries had to be made in such a way because in the immediate post-war period, the railway system, had not '... recovered from the stress of war.'⁴⁸ New machines could be in the possession of the railway company for weeks, being exposed to

⁴³ *Evening Standard*, 20th Oct. 1923.

⁴⁴ Horn, P., *Women in the 1920's*. (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995). p.181.

⁴⁵ Although this might not be the case if she was merely the chauffeur in a machine bought by her father.

⁴⁶ *The Motor Cycle* Sep 23rd 1915 p.297.

⁴⁷ *Motor Cycling* Sep 24th 1919 p.569.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Mrs. Fletcher made up to 3 deliveries per week, riding a total of 600 miles.

the inclemency of the British weather to their detriment, and the annoyance of the eventual new owner. The writer claimed that during the course of her work ‘...the spirit of chivalry among riders of the stronger sex,’ had not diminished, and male riders and drivers often stopped to offer assistance, despite the writer’s mechanical competence, reducing the necessity for this.⁴⁹

Judging by the amount of positive propaganda by the motoring journals, contemporary views outside the pastime on women motorists appeared to consider such women as masculine in appearance and behaviour. Claims were made that working with and handling mechanical things was a masculine trait and caused the user to develop such a physique. This assertion was put forward not only for motorcyclists, as female car drivers also had to contend with such pre-conceptions. A pioneer car driver, Miss Dorothy Levitt, was not as the preface of her book said, ‘...a big strapping Amazon,’ but ‘...the most girlish of womanly women.’⁵⁰ Miss Levitt epitomised the financial requirement of such pioneers, being of sufficient means to be an independent ‘bachelor girl.’⁵¹ The opinion that women who motored on their own account were somewhat less than feminine is another example of how a paternalist society attempted to stem such female independence, by fostering the view that such behaviour was freakish and unnatural. It is unclear where such views originated, but there are some possible explanations, each of which is oversimplistic. Firstly, the upper class might have been to blame, as the paternalist power it wielded could influence all other sectors of society. Here women usually, were in a less privileged position compared to their male counterparts of the same class. Women of this

⁴⁹ The writer, as Miss Rose Hammett, had been a famous trials and competition rider for Douglas prior to the First World War. She had been advised by a doctor to take up riding during the war, because her health had suffered when she stopped.

⁵⁰ O’Connell, S., *The Car...* p.47. Levitt’s book, published in 1909 was *Woman and Her Car: A Chatty Little Book for Women who Motor or Want to Motor*. (London: Lane, 1909).

⁵¹ O’Connell, S., *The Car...* p.47.

class, given the correct circumstances, would be able to afford and might opt for car ownership. Secondly the middle classes, the most probable class to be involved in motorcycle ownership, and aspire towards car ownership, usually looked to the upper class for their ideas on manners and status quo, and would have been influenced by their attitude regarding what constituted appropriate feminine behaviour. Understandably, due to its need to foster a readership and motorcycle use from all sectors of society, the motorcycling press never published an article condemning women riders. Instead the subject was always followed with courtesy and encouragement. Although prejudicial correspondence was sometimes to appear in such journals, it usually provoked heated argument in the letters pages. As an example of this a female contributor writing in 1922, Mab. Lockwood-Taylor posed the question 'If the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world, why should not, 'the hand that rocks the cradle wield the spanner?''⁵²

In a radio interview for the BBC, one of the women riders of the time, Jessie Ennis, claimed always to have been treated with a great deal of courtesy by her male counterparts when taking part in sporting events. She was, '... often the only girl riding amongst a couple of hundred of them... (They were) always very nice to me.'⁵³ Mrs. Ennis hinted at a liberal attitude to the romantic side of things, claiming, 'I had a whale of a time, all above board, more or less!'⁵⁴ This contrasts strongly with a debate, which revealed a strain of anti-female feeling amongst some sectors of the male motorcycling readership of *The Motor Cycle* in 1926. Articles by a female writing under the pseudonym of *Cylinda*, entitled '*Through Feminine Goggles*,' extolled the virtues of lightweight machines and their suitability for women riders. What prompted the discussion in the later press were

⁵² *The Motor Cycle* Oct 5th 1922 p.472.

⁵³ Jeremy Grange (prod.) *Biker Tales. Jessie Ennis*. (BBC Radio 4, 2002).

⁵⁴ Jeremy Grange (prod.) *Biker Tales. Jessie Ennis*. (BBC Radio 4, 2002).

remarks suggesting a feminisation of the pastime. The writer claimed that even that stalwart of masculinity, the Motor Cycling Club, would soon have to form a women's section.⁵⁵ The two letters, which prompted the most response, came from a H. C. Browitt who claimed that '... a woman spoils everything,' that considering 99% of the readership were men, then 99% of the articles should cater for men, and regretted the '... effeminate nature,' which had crept into the paper. This writer revealed much about his anti-feminine views, stating that he had seen pictures in the magazine of girls, (not women) attempting to ride motorcycles. The use of the word girls trivialised the gender, which was unacceptable to later correspondents, who correctly emphasised the skilful way many women had adopted the motorcycle as a means of transport and their sporting successes.⁵⁶ The letter, which prompted the most response, came from a person of unknown gender, who entitled themselves, 'Eva Brick.' This writer claimed that *The Motor Cycle* was in danger of becoming a woman's magazine, due to certain articles regarding women, which seemed obsessed with, 'whether it is possible to ride in silk stockings or whether breeches look out of place?'⁵⁷ It is possible that this correspondent was writing 'tongue in cheek,' but the response the letter caused was not so. Countering this argument, a subsequent writer noted that the front page of the magazine claimed to, '... cover every phase of the movement,' and was merely carrying out to the letter the traditions, which it alone upholds.⁵⁸ It was considered useful and edifying to know the opinions and experiences of the other gender. Another letter revealed an underlying feeling that it was desirable for the woman rider to avoid appearing less than feminine. Although riding breeches were considered practical whilst riding, the relaxation of the then accepted dress codes, did not apply when the woman left the machine. Breeches, when worn off the machine, made the

⁵⁵ *The Motor Cycle* Feb 4th 1926 p.157.

⁵⁶ *The Motor Cycle* Feb 25th 1926 p.275.

⁵⁷ *The Motor Cycle* Feb 25th 1926 p.275.

⁵⁸ *The Motor Cycle* Mar 4th 1926 p.329.

woman, '...undesirably conspicuous on dismounting.' It was felt necessary to avoid such a spectacle and not to be seen as, '...a kind of "sporting bhoy".'⁵⁹ A later article in the same magazine claimed that the correspondence received had been split into what was generally two camps, the pro and anti women riders. Twenty per cent of letters received on the subject were against them and in favour of 'Eva Brick's views, whilst 80% thought that women had a place in the movement.⁶⁰ The minority view of women motorcyclists as being inferior, and the overwhelmingly positive general view expressed in the journals contrast strongly with the condescending and patronising attitude of factory works magazines, discussed in an analysis of Coventry.⁶¹ Here, any encroachment upon what were regarded as male-dominated sporting activities became the subject of cartoons, jokes, and representations of women in subordinate roles. This comparison enforces the view of motorcycling as having a more enlightened attitude towards gender stereotyping. There was a misconception in some parts of society that sport disfigured women. This became more apparent during the interwar period, when energetic sports became popular leisure pursuits for the middle classes and above.⁶²

Despite this, the presence of a woman rider could change the way a club run was undertaken. A female correspondent to *The Motor Cycle* understood this. Having a female rider amongst their ranks moderated the enjoyment that a collection of men could have together. This led to resentment, when wayside inns were passed by with, '...many a

⁵⁹ *The Motor Cycle* Mar 4th 1926 p.329.

⁶⁰ *The Motor Cycle* Mar 11th 1926 p.346. The anti-women faction was most vociferous in their views. One claimed that, 'Motor cycles will never really become popular with the fair sex, since they demand that care and attention, which women are either too idle or too brainless to give.'

⁶¹ Lancaster, B., & Mason, T., (eds.), *Life and Labour in a Twentieth Century City: The Experience of Coventry*. (Coventry: Cryfield Press, 1986). p.273.

⁶² Horn, P., *Women...* p.186. *Vogue* magazine in 1929 assured its readership of the fallacy in the belief that the frown of concentration, gave the player 'tennis face.'

longing look.⁶³ It was argued that women restricted a certain form of self-expression, which presented itself whenever men gather. ‘The good old stories which we delight each other with at the club, have to be altered as soon as women are admitted as members.’⁶⁴ Some men appear to have been concerned about whether their chosen pastime was being feminised in some way by women rider’s influence upon it, and whether men themselves were becoming lesser men by contact with them. ‘Gravity’ writing in *The Motor Cyclist Review* claimed that women spoiled the fun of motorcycling by either being too good at it, and forcing the male into a pampered, sidecar riding sideline, or, at the opposite extreme, being mere dead weight on the flapper bracket. The former sort of lady rider represented a threat to the ‘male preserve’ of the sport, whilst the latter is a nuisance.⁶⁵ *Ixion* of *The Motor Cycle* realised the friction, which could result by having a non-motorcycling spouse or female co-habitee, such as a mother, or ‘... any female person who adopts a callous, brutal and unsympathetic attitude towards our hobby.’⁶⁶ His general advice, if avoiding relationships with such women was impossible, was to prevent them from having any reason to criticise the pastime. For example, *Ixion* recommended:

‘Don’t wipe your hands on the curtains after decoking the cylinder. Don’t spill oil about the house or garden, or even in the back kitchen. Don’t borrow their scissors for carving sheet iron. Don’t keep rubber solution in the drawing room.’⁶⁷

An insight into the self-image of the 1930s male can be found in another article in *The Motor Cyclist Review*. In ‘Fashions in Motor Cycles, Are We Feminine in Our Tastes?’ the writer states that it was a popular fallacy of the time that only women were interested in fashion, and that male motorcyclists were considered to be conservative in their choice

⁶³ *The Motor Cycle* Mar 18th 1926 p.401.

⁶⁴ *The Motor Cycle* Feb 25th 1926 p.275.

⁶⁵ *The Motor Cyclist Review* May 1928 p.602.

⁶⁶ *The Motor Cycle* Jul 16th 1931 p.97.

⁶⁷ *The Motor Cycle* Jul 16th 1931 p.97.

of machine. This was, the writer claimed, disproved by the contemporary motorcyclist's willingness to buy machines painted in stripes or the latest 'jazz' patterns, or ride with handlebars bedecked with mascots, or his willingness to purchase machines with differing engine configurations such as overhead valves or forward sloping cylinders.⁶⁸ What is important here is the question of why it was considered somehow effeminate to be interested in fashion, or to adopt innovative new methods and technical improvements to machines? Motorcycling was a masculine pursuit in so far as the majority of riders were male.

In variance to this, and as proof that this debate had been ongoing for some time, is *The Motor Cycle*'s article, 'A Manly Sport' written in 1926.⁶⁹ Here an insight into just what was considered to be effeminate by some sectors of society is found by the definition of the effeminate man's omissions. Such men, the article claimed, do not, '... play Rugger, do not hunt, or do not join the Territorials.' Instead they were content to make as much noise as possible, whilst trying to impress the ladies perched on the pillion. The article goes to great lengths to disprove this fallacious assumption, emphasising the motorcyclist's involvement in sport, his racing enthusiasm, and hatred of 'red tape.' It was claimed that the majority of criticism of the pursuit as regards manliness, came from people who had never tried it. '... these same people, after coffee and liqueurs, sit at those large windows overlooking Piccadilly, and talk earnestly about Free Trade.'⁷⁰

If an ability to understand and handle mechanical things such as motorcycles is considered to be a masculine trait, then did such abilities, when present in a woman, render her

⁶⁸ *The Motor Cyclist Review* May 1930 p.513.

⁶⁹ *The Motor Cycle* Feb 4th 1926 p.139.

⁷⁰ *The Motor Cycle* Feb 4th 1926 p.141.

subject to doubts about her femininity? Femininity, like its male counterpart is a social construct. A woman learns the traits of womanhood, through experience, and the influences of the society she inhabits. Writers on femininity are unclear as to a concise definition of it, claiming that the concept, '... is implicated in the social construction of the phenomena it appears to describe.'⁷¹ Manly and womanly behaviour appear to be, '... a miscellaneous collection of instances apparently lacking coherence.'⁷² When such traits are discussed, it falls upon the discussants to draw upon past experiences in order to form their views of what is and is not 'ladylike' behaviour. Women motorcyclists, as well as other intrepid adventurers such as Amy Johnson, were sometimes portrayed in the contemporary press as being feminine, to an extent, which was sometimes overemphasised.⁷³ In 1926 and the following year, the British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturers and Traders Union held dinners during the week of the Olympia Show, to which were invited many of the most famous lady riders of the time. On both occasions *The Motor Cycle*, wrote illustrated articles on the event, the pictures of which were intended to show that these women, when out of their usual motorcycling garb, could look feminine, in the accepted sense. The ladies attended the function in evening dresses. Pictures of them in their riding attire and riding their machines were placed alongside, to emphasise the contrast. These articles were included to assure riders of both genders that riding a motorcycle did not affect your femininity or your feminine attraction.⁷⁴ Although clubs now exist to cater exclusively for lesbian riders, it is not known whether such clubs existed openly between the wars, and it would be unlikely that they did, given the

⁷¹ Roman, L. G., Christian-Smith, L. K., & Ellsworth, E., (eds.), *Becoming Feminine: The Politics of Popular Culture*: (London: Falmer, 1988). p.37.

⁷² Ibid p.37.

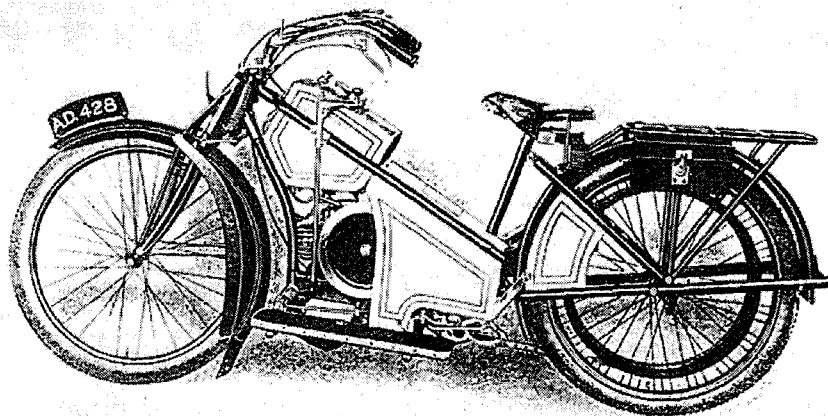
⁷³ See Blythe, R., *The Age of Illusion: England in the Twenties and Thirties*. (London: Phoenix Press, 1988). ch.5. Miss Johnson's marriage to Jim Mollison, was continually portrayed in the press, despite it being based upon a mutual love of flying rather than of each other. Amy was a better flier than Jim. This led to conflict within the marriage, and eventual divorce. Miss Johnson had to be seen to be feminine, as well as a flier. Clearly, she preferred the latter.

⁷⁴ See *My Lady Comes to Town* and *My Lady Comes to Town Again* in *The Motor Cycle* Oct 14th 1926 p.694 & *The Motor Cycle* Nov 10th 1927 p.818.

outrageousness of the idea at that time. No data exists as to the number of lesbians riding motorcycles at this time, as it was not considered relevant.

The act of a woman wearing trousers as opposed to the more traditional skirts was another way in which the female motorcyclist of the inter-war period could cause a mild sort of outrage amongst less broad-minded sectors of society. Trousers were more practical as motorcycle-wear, being warmer, and less liable to flap about in the wind. They also allowed the female wearer to ride more powerful machines, and those that were not designed specifically for a woman's use, such as the open-framed Douglas machines.

Fig. 3.3. *The Douglas Model S Ladies model of 1913.*



Source: Douglas advertising literature. Loose document at VMCC archives.

Trousers were the usual attire for any woman who chose to ride in sporting events. They were not universally popular amongst women riders. In the example of Mrs. Fletcher, as a deliverer of new Douglas machines to customers in London, the lady preferred to wear a sort of waterproof skirt, claiming that, 'Leather outfits or breeches are entirely

unnecessary on the road.’⁷⁵ Mrs. Fletcher stated that such attire made the wearer feel uncomfortable and awkward when entering a hotel or restaurant. Dress codes were important in inter-war society, and breaking them was another way in which the female motorcyclist would inadvertently or deliberately display a rebellion from social norms. The *Evening Standard* noted that even the most enthusiastic female rider, who did not mind dressing in ‘masculine’ attire, attempted to keep her looks, by the application of cold cream to the face. The same woman also confessed to the need to show her femininity. ‘If I want to show a curl or two under my cap, I wear the kind you pin on.’⁷⁶ In this case, the fact that the woman needed to show some badge of her femininity either hints at uneasiness in her position as a motorcyclist, or is a means by which she emphasises her difference.

There will now follow an analysis of the deciding elements required to allow a woman to become a motorcyclist and later provide a brief snapshot of some of the more traceable female motorcyclist’s careers, to give some idea of what sort of woman rode motorcycles during the inter-war period. It would have been almost impossible that a woman ‘of slender means’ would consider the option of personally owning one as being viable, nor would a woman who was still under the moral control of parents solidly against the idea of such extravagances, or any behaviour which would bring their daughter into unchaperoned contact with men. Lastly, it is unlikely but not impossible for the married working class woman to have found the time or money to ride her own motorcycle, unless her husband was interested in the subject. Such a woman’s home life during this period was still very labour intensive. Even as late as 1938, only 4 % of British households had a

⁷⁵ *Motor Cycling* Sep 24th 1919 p.570.

⁷⁶ *Evening Standard* Oct 20th 1923.

washing machine, and only 2% a refrigerator.⁷⁷ It must therefore be the general rule that female motorcyclists were usually, either of independent means, which often meant they were of a quite high social class and or young unmarried and employed or members of a motorcycling family. The woman in question may or may not have graduated to riding her own machine. The female motorcyclist would also either have the approval of her parents, if she was still under their control, or of her husband, if she was married, or be of a sufficiently independent character to ignore convention, not needing to seek the approval of her family members.

During the 1920s, the Flapper was the personification of this essence of rebellious pleasure seeker. Often portrayed in the media as sitting on the 'Flapper bracket' of a motorcycle, she was also the sort who might ride a solo machine:

'Typical of the time was the "Flapper," the independent, un-chaperoned young woman, often supporting herself by a job as secretary, reporter, or salesgirl in a fashionable shop. It was taken for granted that she smoked cigarettes, and in public; she had no reluctance to enter a pub for a drink and she would not refuse a cocktail – more and more the fashionable drink and the fashionable occasion for a party.'⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Thebaud, F., (ed.), *A History of Women in the West: Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*. (Cambridge Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1994). p.103.

⁷⁸ Mowat, C. L., *Britain Between the Wars: 1918- 1940*. (London: Methuen & Co., 1959). p.213.

Fig. 3.4. *A typical flapper.*



Source: *Punch or the London Charivari*, vol.177 1929, p.253.

Such 'modern girls' were also said to be rude to parents and seniors and impatient of authority. They were neglectful of their 'real' duties, (i.e. concentrating upon becoming married,) selfish of their pleasures and uncontrolled in their habits, given to drinking, smoking and sexual promiscuity.⁷⁹ Such a picture came to warrant a lot of criticism from contemporary feminists most notably Winifred Holtby, who claimed that women's pleasures were more conspicuous due mainly to their being more commercialised.⁸⁰ At the outset of the 1920's the press identified the flapper, as a certain kind of 'social butterfly.' Sometimes being part of the social elite, '...frivolous, scantily clad, irresponsible, and undisciplined.'⁸¹ Such acid remarks strengthen the prevalent attitude, that in some way women motorcyclists were less than morally correct. The term 'flapper bracket' itself

⁷⁹ Holtby, W., *Women...* p.117.

⁸⁰ Holtby, W., *Women...* p.119.

⁸¹ Horn, P., *Women...* p.25.

diminishes the respectability of the user, yet it was the one most used for the pillion seat, in the popular and enthusiast press. Motorcycling was never a quiet, inconspicuous pursuit, and when undertaken by a woman, was bound to draw attention to her. This picture is not the one given in the motorcycling press of the period. The two main weekly motorcycling journals, took every possible opportunity to stress the advantages, and pleasure that the pursuit could have for women, be it in the sporting, social, or business fields. This is more than mere politeness to the female readership; it is a phenomenon that contradicts the accepted social mores of a woman's position in society.

All three main motorcycling journals of the period had columns devoted to and written by female riders, as well as occasional articles written by women concerning their slant on the pastime. *The Motor Cyclist Review* had regular articles entitled, 'Entirely for Eve,' 'Eve and Her Motorcycle,' and 'Motorcycling for Ladies.' A Mrs. S.C. Elliot Lynn, under the nom de plume of *Cylinda*, wrote most of these articles. As this was sometimes spelt *Celinda* it is possible that she had a stand-in. *Cylinda* also wrote, 'Through Feminine Goggles' for *The Motor Cycle*. *Paulette* writing for the Douglas Motorcycle Club's magazine *The Con Rod*, exemplifies a woman's view aimed at a smaller, more specialised audience. The style of writing in this last example is more reminiscent of a woman's magazine, devoting itself to appearances, rather than sporting achievements by women. The use of the phrases, 'My Dears,' and 'Darlings' is a regular occurrence in such articles, and represents an attempt to feminise them. The Debenham sisters wrote many articles, as did other famous lady riders, such as Marjorie Cottle and Fay Taylour.⁸² It is possible that

⁸² The former took part in many trials and other sporting events, whilst the latter was a star of the speedway scene.

the comparative rarity of women riders, contributed to the need for them to write articles in such magazines, which in its turn further popularised the pastime amongst women.⁸³

Motorcycling was often promoted as being invigorating and good for physical and mental well-being. An early example of this is the claim by a Mrs. Mary Riley of Birmingham in 1915, that motorcycling had improved her health:

‘Until I took up motorcycling I was one of the most nervous persons, and suffered two serious breakdowns. My doctor advised me to undergo an operation, but happily I altered my mind later, and decided to have a motor cycle and sidecar, so that I could get into the fresh air in comfort.’⁸⁴

Betty Debenham, writing in *The Motor Cyclist's Review*, claimed that her sister Nancy had never suffered a cold since she had taken to riding in all kinds of weather.⁸⁵ These positive attitudes towards women's health contradict the Victorian notion of a woman's desired state to be one of fragility, if they were to be seen as attractive to men. This example hints at the health and fitness movement popular amongst some social classes at the time.⁸⁶ Working class women had been expected to soldier on, despite disabilities incurred as a result of childbirth and other reasons, such as hard physical labour. Upper class women had, at least from Victorian times, been expected to look and appear delicate, mainly because an aura of fitness and health implied that the woman was unfortunate enough to have been forced to work, which in its turn implied a fault in the earning power of her partner. At the dawn of the twentieth century, and the dawn of motorcycling,

⁸³ Marjorie Cottle and Fay Taylour, amongst others had articles published in the magazines giving brief insights into their motorcycling careers. See, *The Motor Cycle* Jan 8th 1931 p.42, and *The Motor Cycle* Sep 25th 1930 p.472 for part of their respective stories.

⁸⁴ VMCC archives, loose document.

⁸⁵ *The Motor Cyclist's Review* Dec 1928 p.303.

⁸⁶ Stevenson, J., *British Society, 1914 – 1945*. p.172.

‘... women were expected to be frail; it was thought ladylike.’⁸⁷ It is likely that the majority of female motorcyclists came from the middle classes or higher, and would be acquainted with such ideas. The conflict between riding motorcycles, along with the benefits to health, which was claimed to result, and the need to keep up appearances would be apparent, were it not for the subtle changes, which occurred in women’s roles, as a result of the First World War. This is another example of how women motorcyclists epitomised the demise of the old status quo. That they were given encouragement in the motorcycling press, points not only to the need for such publications to promote motorcycling in all its forms, but also hints at a certain type of subversive quality, by such magazines, in that they encouraged women to indulge in their hobby instead of remaining housebound, as certain sectors of the male population would have them.

If it is correct to assume that the majority of male riders had wives or girlfriends, then it would be correct to say that, a woman’s usual place on a motorcycle was on the pillion, seated behind the rider or by their side in a sidecar. Controversy raged as to the safety and legality of the former practice, as it was often the case that the motorcycle was not equipped to carry a passenger. Instead, in some motorcycling circles it was perfectly acceptable for the rider to sit on a luggage rack, upon a cushion, with no proper footrests. The danger of this was compounded by the damaged state of the roads, and doubly so, if the passenger was female and in the habit of sitting sidesaddle. This practice was condemned in the motorcycling press, who recommended the fitting of proprietary pillion seats and footrests.⁸⁸ The legal aspects of pillion riding were debatable and are discussed in chapter four.

⁸⁷ Holdsworth, A., *Out of the Doll’s House...* p.86.

⁸⁸ See *The Motor Cycle* Nov 9th 1922 p.636.

Motorcycling has always had its fair share of intrepid women amongst its ranks. The trip from Lands End to John O'Groats was first made by motorcycle in 1902 by E.H. Arnott.⁸⁹ The first woman to achieve this was Miss Muriel Hind in 1908. Both journeys were exceptional considering the technology available and the condition of the roads. Two of the three founder members of the International Motorcyclist's Tour Club were women. In 1932 Eve Simmonds and Ida Crow were the Honorary Treasurer and Chairman, the latter remaining at her post until shortly before her death in 1981.⁹⁰ Amongst the clubs more colourful members, Madame Barbara Petigura joined in 1934, after recently arriving from Russia.⁹¹

By the inter-war period, motorised transport had become reliable enough to be used as a means of exploring the world. The 1920s and 1930s were also a time when many feats of endurance were achieved, records broken, and parts of the world visited by hardy individuals, in ships, planes and various forms of land vehicle. The publicity gained when such explorations or record-breaking was achieved by women, gives valuable insights into their position in society at the time. Perhaps the most famous of these was Amy Johnson, who in her epic flight to Australia in May 1930, transcended inhibitions of gender and class.⁹² The African Continent with its inherent dangers of poor roads, unhealthy climate, and uncertain weather, was a popular region for European explorers by road transport. This was a by-product of the Imperialist, 'Scramble for Africa' because it emphasised the Empire's controlling influence, by the venture being possible. Again, when the explorer

⁸⁹ Captain of the MCC. The trip was made in 65hrs 45 mins on a Werner machine. An incredible feat considering the roads and machines available.

⁹⁰ Curtis, J. A., *The International Motorcyclist's Tour Club since 1932*. (Exeter: Stanbury Press, 1999). p.8.

⁹¹ Curtis, J. A., *The International...* p.16. This name is a mystery, although after extensive enquiries, it is possible that the woman in question was Dr. Barbara Moore-Pataleewa, author of *I am a Woman from Soviet Russia*. (London: Victor Gollancz, 1943), who was famous for her vegetarianism and endurance-walking in the 1950s.

⁹² Amy's parents were middle class fish factory owners. Aeroplanes were the forte of the upper class, and there were very few female pilots.

was a woman, and especially when she was British, such exploits were guaranteed to cause a stir.⁹³ One of the best-publicised adventures by women motorcyclists during this period is the Pan Continental trip made across Africa by Miss Wallach and Miss Blenkiron. Commencing in December 1934, they took eight months to travel the 14,000 miles from London to Cape Town, on a 600cc Panther and sidecar.⁹⁴ Both these women were exceptional motorcyclists, having each achieved a Gold Star at Brooklands, in 1934 in the case of Miss Blenkiron, and in 1939 in the case of Miss Wallach.⁹⁵ These women and their Africa adventure provided inspiration for women riders, as did the exploits of many others.⁹⁶ The ownership of a motorcycle put this sort of tour within the aspirations of sectors of society, which had previously only been able to experience it second hand, through literature. Whenever the female motorcyclist set forth on a tour and the press covered it, her independent self-reliance was stressed. This is true of Miss Margot Ronan, who undertook several extended tours of Europe and Africa in the 1930s, on a Harley Davidson with sidecar, which she wrote about in the journals.⁹⁷ Another of her articles,

⁹³ Horn, P., *Women...* p.38. An example of this lies in the journey made in 1928 by Mrs. Diana Strickland, who crossed from Dakar on the West Coast to Massawa on the Red Sea, in a Star motorcar. Beginning the journey with a companion and mechanic, she finished it alone, showing the world that a woman could have the necessary determination to overcome adversity.

⁹⁴ Most of the journey was over terrain previously untravelled by motorcycle, including 2000 miles of Saharan desert. Only the last 3700 miles were over recognised routes. The trip took them across Algeria, Nigeria, French Equatorial Africa, the Belgian Congo, Tanganyika, and Rhodesia. They intended to return by the same route, and had filmed the journey. Both women were members of the International Motorcyclist's Tour Club, which was formed in 1932 and is still in existence. <http://www.imtc.org.uk> (Accessed: 18 April 2007). Due to illness Theresa Wallach did not do the return journey, but later wrote a book about their adventures. Wallach, T., *The Rugged Road*. (1936; London: Panther Publishing, 2001). This left Florence Blenkiron with the task of traversing the continent and returning home without her former companion.

⁹⁵ A Gold Star was awarded at the Brooklands racetrack for any rider lapping at over 100mph.

⁹⁶ Another example, set earlier in the period, is the solo Continental tour of Europe, by Miss Gwendoline Adams, in 1927. Riding a 346cc New Imperial motorcycle, Miss Adams took two months during which time she visited many sights of cultural importance, in an imitation of the Grand Tours undertaken by the upper classes of a previous era. Despite being given letters of introduction to the important motorcycling clubs there, for social and emergency purposes, she stressed the importance of dispensing with outside assistance as much as possible, without causing offence. This wish to be independent on the journey, shows the character of a woman desirous of being in control of her own affairs, despite still having the bonus of a network of clubs, willing to give assistance if required.

⁹⁷ *Motor Cycling* Apr 3rd p.686 & 24th p.806, 1935 and Jun 24th 1936 p. 260. Perhaps the most notable of which in the sense that it contravened the popular notion of the helpless female, was to the Gold Coast of Africa, where she succeeded in finding, 'life in the raw'. This with the aid of two sailor acquaintances, she

concerning a tour of Italy, gives a clue about the social class and work pursued by women who attempted such journeys. Here Miss Ronan mentions ‘... your next fortnight’s holiday.’⁹⁸ The most a working-class woman could usually expect during this period was a week spent at an English seaside resort.⁹⁹ Some banks allowed a fortnight at the outset of employment for their female clerks, with an extra week after fifteen years service. Teachers had the longest holidays with a month in the summer and two weeks for Easter and Christmas.¹⁰⁰ Women motorcyclists who chose to embark upon such tours would have usually come from such careers. They would have had to have been older, to accrue the extra time off work, and probably spinsters to have taken longer holidays because of the marriage bar which prevailed in such professions.

There was some reluctance by women to take part in competitive sporting aspects of the pursuit. There were some exceptional female riders, some of whom shall be mentioned later. An example of this reluctance is found in a document listing the entrants for the 1928 London-Gloucester-London trial, held by the North West London Motor Club. The event was held in December, and was open to solo and sidecar machines, three-wheelers, and cars. Out of 227 entrants, only 10 can be identified as female riders. There were also 5 female entrants in the car section. Seven out of the fifteen are marked as trade entries, which meant that they were sponsored by the make of machine they rode, or by a firm selling such machines. The trade used sporting events such as this as publicity exercises, as well as a means of testing and developing their machines. Using women riders drew

found in the, ‘toughest inn on the coast.’ Miss Ronan emphasised the magnitude to which the pleasure of a journey was enhanced by making contact with the indigenous population.

⁹⁸ *Motor Cycling* Apr 24th 1935 p.806.

⁹⁹ Horn, P., *Women...* p.179. This was often afforded through weekly saving schemes. The exceptions to this, setting aside those of independent means, were office workers who started with ten days holiday in the summer, and who were rewarded with an extra day for every seven years they worked with the firm.

¹⁰⁰ Horn, P., *Women...* p.179.

attention to the machine, as it emphasised ease of handling, reliability, and comfort.¹⁰¹ It was also common practice to allow men and women who had had some success in the sporting part of the pursuit to be involved in research and development of new models. In the inter-war period such research was done at a purely practical level, by road testing machines to their limit.¹⁰²

In 1921 *Motor Cycling* suggested some of the reasons why women appeared reluctant to compete in club-organised events. Shyness in competing with men was mentioned, as was opposition by a spouse. It was claimed that taking part had become too expensive after the war, ‘... considering that running expenses and accommodation are at least 50% higher than they were.’¹⁰³ A major hurdle to prospective female entrants in major trials was their total banning from Motor Cycle Club events in 1931. The club claimed that allowing a number of ‘incompetent riders’ to take part would cause a lot of accidents, bringing the club bad publicity. In discriminating in such a way, the MCC gives another insight into how women were considered as inferior by some sectors of inter-war society, being in this case considered more fragile and accident-prone. It also shows the extent to which a club’s reputation was considered worthy of being upheld, in the face of criticism from anti-

¹⁰¹ Vintage Motor Cycle Club archives.

¹⁰² One of the most famous lady riders of the time was Marjorie Cottle, who had great success in trials, and other forms of motorcycle sport. Raleigh Motorcycles enlisted her aid in July 1926. Miss Cottle rode one of their machines from London to Edinburgh, using the available roads to write the company’s name across the country as a publicity exercise, visiting Raleigh stockists on the journey. *Chester-le-street Chronicle*, Jul 16th 1926, noted, Miss Cottle, ‘...passed through Chester-le-Street on Tuesday afternoon on a 1 7/8th horsepower Raleigh motorcycle. Miss Cottle left London on July 5th and hopes to complete her task in 10 days.’ She did not confine her activities to one make of machine. One interviewee from Barnard Castle, encountered during the course of this work met pair of woman motorcyclists at Carter Bar whilst on a ride to Scotland in the 1930s. The rider was on a ‘baby BSA’, travelled quickly, despite having a passenger, and found no difficulty in the bends in the road. Later at Jedburgh the interviewee discovered the machine to be a new model, ‘with an oil pressure gauge in the tank.’ This was never heard of at the time. The rider was Marjorie Cottle, who was testing next years model. She claimed that, ‘What we ride this year, you buy next year.’ In this case it is likely that the model she was testing was one of the small 150cc machines being developed by the industry as a result of demand for an ‘Everyman’s machine’ brought about by the depressed state of the industry in the early part of the 1930s.

¹⁰³ *Motor Cycling* Jan 12th 1921 p.336.

motorcycling factions. Whether the decision to ban women was a result of pressure from outside influences or because of fundamental gender attitudes within the club is unclear.

Other motorcycling organisations appear to have had a more enlightened attitude to women riders. Miss Ida Crow, writing in the *International Motorcyclist's Tour Club* history, claims that the first club to organise and run a sporting event purely for females was the Wood Green and District Motor Club. This was a reliability trial, held in January 1927. It attracted 34 entrants.¹⁰⁴ This shows the independent attitude that existed in some motor clubs, in that they were not always willing to cooperate and comply with rules made by larger, longer established clubs or organisations such as the MCC, or to a lesser extent, the ACU. If this had not been the case, motorcycling would have been a stricter and less popular pursuit.

The club database compiled from 1932 shows that woman appeared very rarely as official contact names for clubs. Of the 385 clubs listed, only 3 married women appear, and only 5 single women. Of these, four female contact names appear in the data pertaining to the London Ladies Motor Club. The reason for the apparent reluctance for women to advertise as club contacts is unclear. A possible reason for this is the relative lack of women involved in the pursuit and their limited chances of being given leadership roles when they were. It is also possible that having a man in charge or as a figurehead gave more authority to the club especially if the man had status in other directions, such as rank.¹⁰⁵ The data shows that women clearly had far to go at this time before they achieved a status, which allowed them to be seen in a position of authority over men in such organisations. There are always exceptions.

¹⁰⁴ Curtiss, J. A., *The International...* p.38.

¹⁰⁵ See page 112.

The London Ladies Motor Club was formed in 1926. This was possibly to fulfil a need for such an organisation to counter perceived male proliferation in motor clubs, and to cater for the female motorcyclist's needs. This club represents another aspect of female emancipation, where women needed to be independent of men in their chosen pursuit. As far as is known, this is one of only two clubs set up at this time exclusively for female members, the other being the Yorkshire Ladies Motor Cycle Club.¹⁰⁶ This northern club, formed in the same year as the London club, was based in the Barnsley area, and extended its membership to women within a 50 mile radius of the town, whether motorcycle owners or not. The club's aims were to provide companionship of their own sex for those solo riders who desired it, to organise sporting and social events, holidays in England and abroad and '...to make a study of the motorcycle from the lady rider's point of view.'¹⁰⁷ That female only clubs were such a rarity is due to women being readily accepted into other motor clubs. Despite a certain kind of opposition from some male elements, gentlemanly courtesy prevailed here. It is not known whether any clubs existed during this period with an exclusively male membership. The London Club attracted many famous lady riders of the time including Miss Ida Crow of the IMTC and the Debenham sisters. In line with the majority of clubs, the LLMCC organised sporting events, in their case, the Lady Campbell Challenge Cup Trial, runs and rallies.¹⁰⁸ The club laid on food for picnic runs, in an attempt to cater for '...the business girl with small means,' in order that as many women could participate in club activities as possible.¹⁰⁹ In an attempt to acknowledge the place women had in motorcycling and to unify them, the LLMCC organised a meeting in June 1930 in which all women riders were invited to Hendon

¹⁰⁶ *The Motor Cycle* Apr 23rd 1931. Amongst its committee membership were Edith Foley (VP) V. Worsley (Pres.) and W. Parkin (Hon. Sec.)

¹⁰⁷ *The Motor Cycle* Feb 24th 1927 p.315.

¹⁰⁸ See database.

¹⁰⁹ *The Motor Cyclist Review* Apr 1928 p.551.

Aerodrome. Amongst the prizes was the usual one of longest distance travelled, and for the woman who had been riding for the longest period.¹¹⁰

Any oral testimony from this period is hampered by the necessity of the required interviewees to be aged between 80 and 90 years old. Of the few interviews gained, most have been of women, possibly because men do not live as long, or are less willing to be interviewed. The BBC made one of the most fascinating of these interviews in 2002. Jessie Enniss, a 92 yr old gave an interview for Radio 4 about her riding career, concentrating on her years as a works rider for New Imperial Motor Cycles.¹¹¹ During the 20s and 30s Jessie Enniss, from the age of 16 worked for the company, testing new models. Beginning in 1926, it was to be unpaid work but meant she got, ‘... a new machine almost every year,’ to be ridden in as many trials and races as possible.¹¹² That a 16 year old girl was allowed to be a works rider for one of the most successful inter-war period motorcycle companies, is yet another example of the industry’s willingness to exploit the advertising potential of women in this field.¹¹³ Her motorcycling career started when she was aged 11, and her brother brought an ex War Division Douglas home to be repaired and used.¹¹⁴ Being introduced to motorcycling by a male member of the family is a common trait. The usual introduction to the pastime was as a pillion. As an adjunct to this, later in the rider’s career, Mrs. Enniss’ mother was a passenger in the sidecar when she took part in trials and other sporting events.¹¹⁵ After the Second World War, Mrs. Enniss, again at the suggestion of her brother, partnered him when they took up the hazardous

¹¹⁰ *The Motor Cyclist Review* Jul 1930 p.45. The longest distance travelled was 273 miles, by a Miss Chris Herbert, from Pembrokeshire, and the longest period of being a rider went to a Miss Winifred Parkin of Manchester, who had ridden during the First World War.

¹¹¹ Jeremy Grange (prod.), *Biker Tales. Jessie Ennis*. (BBC Radio 4, 2002).

¹¹² Jeremy Grange (prod.), *Biker Tales. Jessie Ennis*. (BBC Radio 4, 2002).

¹¹³ New Imperial were second only to Norton for Isle of Man TT wins during this period.

¹¹⁴ Jeremy Grange (prod.), *Biker Tales. Jessie Ennis*. (BBC Radio 4, 2002).

¹¹⁵ Jeremy Grange (prod.), *Biker Tales. Jessie Ennis*. (BBC Radio 4, 2002).

pursuit of stunt riding, her speciality being riding through a pane of glass.¹¹⁶ Again, it would have appeared as an extra special spectacle for a woman to perform such a feat.

Another role by which the female motorcyclist could compete against men through sport was in the field of speedway or dirt track. This sport was relatively new, having been imported from New Zealand in 1928.¹¹⁷ Two of the most famous lady exponents of the sport were Fay Tylour (1908–1983) and Eva Asquith who were of the same generation, born in 1906. The women came from different backgrounds, Miss Tylour being born in Ireland and educated at Alexandra College, Dublin, whilst Miss Asquith was a farmer's daughter from Bedale in Yorkshire. The latter learned to ride whilst serving in the army after the First World War.¹¹⁸ Both of these women were good all-round competition riders taking part in trials, hill climbs and other events, but they rose to fame during the 1920s when they competed against each other on the cinder track, usually in a field of male riders.¹¹⁹ Dirt track is a dangerous sport, and riders are often injured. One injury to Vera Hole, during a parade of riders in April 1930, prompted the ACU to impose a ban on lady riders. In doing this, the ACU again displayed an eagerness to impose its power upon the sporting motorcyclist. Instead of promoting changes, which might improve safety, it chose the easiest option. This did not prevent the Misses Tylour and Asquith from continuing their sport abroad in Spain and Australia.¹²⁰ The extent to which such women riders promoted the sport through the novelty of their gender is not known. Their riding skill, was exceptional, and might have influenced the extent to which the sport became popular with women spectators, especially when they beat their male opponents.

¹¹⁶ Jeremy Grange (prod.), *Biker Tales. Jessie Ennis*. (BBC Radio 4, 2002).

¹¹⁷ See page 24.

¹¹⁸ <http://clevelandparklife.intheteam.com/modules/page/page.aspx?pc=home>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007)

¹¹⁹ There were several other successful women dirt track riders, including, Vera Hole, who raced under the name, Miss Sunny Somerset, Babs Neild, and Dot Cowley.

¹²⁰ <http://www.chriswillis.freemove.co.uk/Sayersbikes.htm>. (Accessed: 18 April 2007).

The heroic exploits of the above women did not meet with unopposed approval. There still existed a lingering form of chauvinism amongst certain articulate men, which caused them to express their disapproval of women, taking part in such a dangerous sport. Lawrence H. Cade exemplified this attitude, writing in *The Con Rod*, the club magazine for Douglas owners. Cade writing when the sport of dirt track was new to Britain, considered that women were too fragile to dice with death or serious injury during speedway, they look best, he thought, ‘...on the flapper bracket of a touring mount, their dainty little frilleries blowing about in the breeze.’¹²¹ The writer considered that taking part in trials, and beating male opponents was as far as women should be allowed to go in motorcycle competition, because, ‘...there is all the difference between scratching your arm and tearing it.’¹²² An article by *Cylinda* in 1928 gives some clue as to why she and her contemporaries held speedway racing in great fascination. On her first visit to Stanford Bridge racetrack, she claimed to be, ‘...harrowed and thrilled’ by the spectacle, whilst feeling concern for onlookers with weak hearts. This was combined with a ‘...state of perpetual wonderment,’ as to how the riders managed to do it.¹²³ Being able to witness, and in a sense experience at second-hand a dangerous pursuit, whilst being in the relative safety of a crowd, behind a barrier, as well as thrilling to the victor’s accomplishment, is what made speedway, and other similar sports, popular.

There is a certain human trait, which allows the experience of danger at second-hand to be popular. One of the most dangerous forms of motorcycling entertainment was the Wall of Death. Motordrome as it is referred to in America is one of the most radical aspects of

¹²¹ *The Con Rod* Aug 28th 1928 p.13.

¹²² *The Con Rod* Aug 28th 1928 p.13.

¹²³ *The Motor Cyclist Review* Sep 1928 p.128.

motorcycling, being closely related to the circus and showmanship. It is relevant in this chapter because it is another way in which women could assert themselves as motorcyclists, in the most outrageous fashion, whilst at the same time providing an exciting spectacle. The practice began in at the dawn of the twentieth century, when motorcycles became powerful enough to attain sufficient speed to rise up the sides of the specially built wooden walled constructions, which were an offshoot of American wooden racetracks. It took a great deal of skill and bravery to ride the wall of death. When a woman did so, it added an extra element to the spectacle, that of being brave and skilful enough to do what many men could not. 'Tornado Smith' writing in *Motor Cycling*, explains one woman's path to becoming a wall rider.¹²⁴ Marjorie Dare began by being his pillion, performing acrobatic displays whilst circuiting the wall, before eventually riding solo. This was often done with the added attraction of having a lion in the arena, which enhances the elements of danger to further entertain the crowd. This element of experiencing danger vicariously, when combined with a female rider, provides the spectator with one of the most exciting spectacles to be available at the time. It can be compared with contemporary 'Barnstorming' aeroplane displays, which often had women wing-walkers. The above writer made such comparisons when referring to when accidents occurred. The best thing to do was to remount the machine and carry on as soon as possible.¹²⁵ The questions, why did the public feel the need to experience even at second-hand such dangers, and whether placing a woman in such danger merely added to the novelty value, or provided some sort of deep psychological thrill, are interesting. Women, who practised the art of wall of death riding, displayed an expertise superior to that of the spectator, providing another example of how women could achieve and better the performance of men. The whole idea of the wall of death is an example of the concept of

¹²⁴ *Motor Cycling* Oct 21st 1936 p.786.

¹²⁵ *Motor Cycling* Oct 21st 1936 p.787.

multo in parva, much in little. The spectacle is a condensed form of all the exciting aspects of motorcycling, shrunk and made more thrilling by the proximity of the machine's wheels to the spectator's noses. Velocity, noise, the defiance of gravity, and the ability to master the machine in unusual circumstances, all within the confined space of the motordome provide motorcycling in essence.

In the more mundane aspects of the pursuit, some sectors of the industry realised the importance of catering for the special requirements of the woman rider, to the extent that several manufacturers produced machines designed to allow the female rider to wear feminine attire. It was also assumed that women needed to sit in a different manner from men, being less astride the machine than inside it. This harks back to bicycle frame differences and further to horse riding and the different saddles for men and women. The origins of this practise lie in the assumption that a woman would damage her sexual organs, which would make her less suitable for marriage if she sat astride the horse. It is notable that many women who had become serious motorcyclists sat in the usual male manner astride the vehicle, and indeed it was not possible to operate them efficiently in any other way. The condition of the roads and the inherent vibration, which usually accompanied the machine, was not conducive to maintaining a favourable appearance at the best of times. The majority of motorcycles had a tube running along the top of the frame, from which the petrol tank was fastened. There were a few notable exceptions to this. The Scott motorcycle, designed by Alfred Scott from Yorkshire, had been designed from scratch in 1908, and was not based upon a bicycle frame, having no top tube¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Johnstone, G., *Classic Motorcycles*. (London, 1993). p.23.

The Megola from Germany was another more exclusive machine, with an open frame. Heavily weather protected with deeply valanced mudguards and legshields, its five-cylinder engine was mounted inside the front wheel.¹²⁷ Cheaper to purchase and more practical especially as a lady's machine, was the Neracar. This was similar in appearance to the Megola, although it was fitted with a simpler engine.¹²⁸ The immediate post-war period saw a boom in the popularity of scooter-like machines, which were also intended for female use. This boom was short lived, due mainly to the unreliability of the machines, and to the fact that many companies produced them to cash in on a demand for cheap transport, having previously had no experience of motorcycle manufacture. Such companies were often short lived and have passed into obscurity. In addition to this both the Megola and Neracar ceased production after a few years, due possibly to their radical designs being less popular than more traditional ones, although the Scott continued production in some form into the 1960s, more due to its sporting successes than its frame design.¹²⁹ Women motorcyclists also had the choice of many smaller, lightweight models from the various manufacturers, and these were recommended by the journals and adopted for use. The Debenham sisters, who took part in many sporting events, and had work published in contemporary magazines, are usually portrayed riding a brace of 2-¼ hp BSAs.¹³⁰

As a final example of the place women had within the motorcycling movement, it is apt to include how they aided advertising the product. Women were sometimes used by the industry in publicity photographs to sell motorcycles in addition to the various firms' use

¹²⁷ See Guggenheim Museum, *The Art of the Motorcycle*. (New York, 2001). p.138. See plate 6.14 in Chapter 6. See also the Pullin Groom model in plate 6.11.

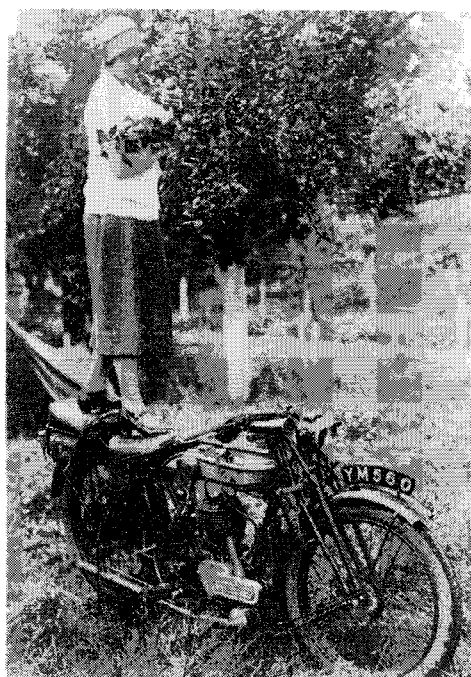
¹²⁸ Guggenheim Museum, *The Art...* p.144.

¹²⁹ Tragatsch, E., *The New Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Motorcycles*, Scott's in production from 1909 –late 1960s p.452. Megola from 1921 – 1925 p.354. Neracar from 1921 – 1926 p.389.

¹³⁰ *The Motor Cyclist Review* Jul 1927 p.21.

of other female sporting rider's successes. Female motorcyclists could be portrayed as projecting a healthy image of youth, beauty, and a fondness for nature and the outdoor life, which the possession of a motorcycle could put within reach of the town-dweller. The following picture is interesting because it conjures a biblical image of Eve picking an apple. The motorcycle could be construed as representing the serpent assisting her, although Eve, by standing upon the machine, subdues and tames it:

Fig. 3.5. *A Norton used to harvest fruit.*



Source: Johnstone, G., *Classic Motorcycles*. (London: Boxtree Ltd., 1993). p.34.

In conclusion, despite the inroads made towards changing accepted attitudes to the extent to which women were capable of using motorised transport effectively as seen by their successes in sporting events and the various ground-breaking tours, such prejudices persisted, amongst less enlightened sectors of the mostly male population. As O'Connell

has stressed, these prejudices tended to be put forward in a pseudo-biological format, which has equal relevance for motorcar and motorcycle. Chandos Bidwell, a motoring correspondent for *Autocar*, defined his objections to female motorists, claiming for instance that driving went against the premise of man as a provider and woman as being provided for. Men, he claimed had the sort of mind, which was dictated to by reason, whilst women were governed by their emotions. A woman's vanity was also claimed to influence her actions, and as it was claimed physically weaker than a man.¹³¹ Some women were in a position to provide for themselves. To generalise as to the physical attributes of gender is to deny that some women are stronger than men, and are as able to use machinery, this being proved in the case of the period under study, by for example their war work in factories.

Female motorcyclists from the inter-war period appear to have been made up of a population of mostly young, mostly middle class in its broadest sense, unmarried women, either in employment or with sufficient funds to purchase and run a machine. Women could motorcycle by other means if they were fortunate enough to know another person who did so. This could be achieved by use of the controversial pillion seat, or by sidecar, which was often seen as a poor man's motorcar. Working class women and girls could motorcycle by proxy, if their spouses or male relatives did so, but the bicycle was more within their means. As a means of contrast, Suzanne McDonald-Walker has done some detailed work into the character of the contemporary female motorcyclist.¹³² McDonald-Walker found that some female interviewees found the genderlessness achieved by donning motorcycling attire to be a useful means of disguise and a way to gain a kind of

¹³¹ O'Connell, S., *The Car...* p.54.

¹³² McDonald-Walker, S., *Bikers: Culture, Politics and Power*. (Oxford: Berg, 2000). pp.55 – 70.

equality with other road users.¹³³ Another character trait of some female riders was a bloody-minded determinism to follow the pastime.¹³⁴ Others were described as strong-charactered, 'ballsy females, whilst some felt the need to rebel against society's expectations regarding submissive female behaviour.¹³⁵ Whether these traits were apparent in interwar female motorcyclists is uncertain, although having some or all of them would have been beneficial in an increasing amount, considering the efforts being made to control the pastime by both internal and external forces. It is the latter that will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹³³ Ibid. p.60.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p.63.

¹³⁵ Ibid, pp64 & 65.

Chapter 4: The Law and the Motorcyclist: Legislation and its implementation.

This chapter will deal with the various ways that the pursuit of motorcycling was controlled, both at the high level of government legislation, and on the level of local police forces and magistrates' courts. The effectiveness of both areas will be studied, as well as the attitudes of riders towards such legislation and its imposition, through a study of contemporary opinions expressed by interviewees, and those found in the motorcycling journals. An analysis of magistrates' records regarding traffic offences from the Darlington area, held at Durham County Records Office, will show the extent to which the law was upheld, and which parts of the law were most likely to be broken.¹ The forces at work in the formulation of motoring law will be analysed. It has been found necessary to make reference to more general aspects of motoring, which include subjects relevant to the motorcar and motorcycle, in order that the subject can be explored more broadly.

Transport law concerning two-wheelers is a subject about which the historiography is relatively scarce. Despite this, an analysis of the law and its implementation regarding motorcycling proved to be a fruitful exercise. An engagement made with the existing historiography, which lays mainly in published articles in academic journals, is of use. Also where appropriate, comparisons will be made with relevant parts of Sean O'Connell's *The Car...* and an earlier work, by William Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics*. Two of the main perceived reasons for transport legislation during this period were to firstly provide preventative measures against road accidents, and secondly, to extract what was considered adequate revenue from the motorist ostensibly for the upkeep

¹ Two interesting aspects of the documents reveal the age range of the miscreants, which provides an answer to one aspect of who rode motorcycles during this time, and the fines imposed, which show, the degrees of seriousness to which the offences were viewed.

of the roads. Both of these phenomena became increasingly complex as the century progressed and were two of the main reasons for the growth of the road lobby, with its links with motor manufacturers, road builders, commercial transport groups and motoring organizations.²

In James Foreman Peck's chapter on motor accidents, in T. Barker's collection of essays on motoring,³ he claims that at the turn of the twentieth century the 'diffusion of the motor vehicle merely displaced one source of death on the roads for another,' and that this was true not just for Britain but also other countries.⁴ The motor vehicle gradually overtook other forms as the major cause of death on the roads as the century progressed. Foreman-Peck also asserts that, especially in Britain, the main road user to suffer this fate was the pedestrian. By way of comparison, in for instance 1928, motorcycle riders or passengers accounted for one quarter of road fatalities.⁵ Government awareness regarding the increasing importance of controlling the use of motor vehicles resulted in a steadily more comprehensive set of regulatory measures, found in the main transport acts of the time. An in-depth study of the parliamentary journal *Hansard* provided much relevant information, regarding some of the debates regarding motorcycling, with the intention of shedding new light upon the subject. Much of this related to safety aspects such as accidents with a particular bias towards pillion riding. Another of the main areas of interest has concentrated upon locally sourced records for the Darlington area concerning prosecutions for motoring offences by motorcyclists in order that some idea of the extent and means by which the laws were enforced is found. A component part of this concerned an analysis of

² Hamer, M., *Wheels Within Wheels: A Study of the Road Lobby*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987). p.8.

³ Barker, T., (ed.), *The Economic and Social Effects of the Spread of Motor Vehicles*. (London: Macmillan, 1987).

⁴ Ibid, chapter 14, p.265.

⁵ Pickard, J. A. A., 'Accident prevention', *Journal of the Institute of Transport* 12 (1930) pp. 73 – 82 cited in Ibid.

speeding prosecutions. Foreman-Peck asserts that with regard to speed limits as being a deciding factor in the control of road fatalities in Britain, 'regulatory reaction was almost as arbitrary as it was ineffective.'⁶ The 20mph or less, limit imposed at the start of the century was outmoded and mostly ignored by the time it was removed in 1930. In 1935 a 30mph limit was introduced in built-up areas. Plowden's research shows that this had little effect on road casualties, which remained at between 6 and 7 thousand deaths per year between 1928 and 1938, whilst injuries steadily rose between 164,838 and 226,711 in the same period. These figures must be assessed whilst taking into account the rise in the number of motor vehicles from just over 2 millions to just over 3 millions in these years.⁷ The records held regarding the Darlington area to be analysed below, reveal that the emphasis on prosecutions lay, not as might be expected on enforcing the speed limit because of a perceived need to maintain road safety, but on various user omissions such as ineffective lighting. Speeding *per se* did not figure in the documentary evidence, although offences such as dangerous or careless driving did. Another point noted by Foreman-Peck concerns the link between safety legislation and manufacturers. He asserts that the maker would be more aware of the properties of their vehicles than the buyers, and that if they were to be liable for accidents caused in this fashion, then it would result in safer vehicles.⁸ Warwick University Modern Records Office contains documents, which allow for expansion on this work to reveal the similar concerns of the motorcycle industry regarding compliance with legislation. For instance, pillion seating and silencing and the safety of a machine during an accident were discussed by the BCMCMTU during the 1930s.⁹

⁶ Barker, T., (ed.), *The Economic and Social Effects...* p.276.

⁷ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car and Politics, 1896 – 1970*. (London: The Bodley Head, 1971). pp.456 – 457.

⁸ Barker, T., (ed.), *The Economic and Social Effects...* p.282.

⁹ MSS 204/1/1/9 p.1552. With reference to the *Road Traffic Act 1930* a meeting discussed what within the terms of the law a pillion seat was and how to design them in compliance with the law. On p.1524 silencing was discussed with the proposal that some form of type certificate be formulated. In 1936

Sean O'Connell in *The Motor Car...* devotes a chapter to the related subject of road safety, the overall impression given was the importance felt by the motoring organisations such as the RAC and AA and industry of encouraging a *laissez-faire* philosophy in the government towards legislation.¹⁰ In concord with this, the National Safety First Association, an organisation with a strong industrial bias was a powerful influence. The perceived increasing politicisation of British motorcycling as a result of what was seen in the specialist press as discriminatory legislation, resulted in the formation of the British Motor Cycle Association, probably the first of the 'rider's rights associations,' others of which became prominent in the movement during the 1970's and 1980's. O'Connell has also noted the increasing feeling of indignation and embarrassment caused by the enforcement of the speed limit and other motor laws, bringing the middle class driver under the control of the working class policeman, and how towards the end of the period the 'growing car ownership amongst magistrates gave them a different perspective on motoring offences.'¹¹ There was little evidence for this with regard to motorcycling, despite the probability of magistrates being familiar with this form of transport and its associated idiosyncrasies, at least in the snapshot investigated. Many articles in the specialist press advised the riders how to conduct themselves when apprehended for motoring offences as well as during court appearances, with an emphasis that patience, firmness and politeness be used in the presence of the magistrate in order that the situation was alleviated. Also, several articles appeared, written by various members of the police forces, who probably were involved in motorcycling in an effort to prevent alienation. The general consensus of interviewees regarding police attitudes to their sport was that they

discussions with Mr. Victor Horseman of the Motor Agents Association recommended that machines should be improved so that they were not so vulnerable in case of impact or fall.

¹⁰ O'Connell, S., *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896 – 1939*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998). p.143.

¹¹ Ibid p.133

were not usually biased against motorcycling and sometimes, but not always had a relaxed attitude towards law enforcement in this area.

It is necessary to discuss a slightly earlier period of history, to provide a background to this study. There appears to have been an ingrained abhorrence of motor vehicles, by those who wielded political and legal power, when they first began to appear, which allowed for legislation such as the 'Red Flag Law' to be imposed.¹² One of the circumstances of this was that it allowed continental businesses, mainly French and German, to take the lead in motoring and motorcycling development. When the 1878 *Highways and Locomotives (Amendment) Act* was replaced in 1896 by *The Locomotives on Highways Act*, known as the Emancipation Act, it provided the incentive for the British motorcycle and car industries to develop.¹³ Despite this, there remained at the turn of the century much opposition to motorcycling, and other types of powered transport, which was to endure throughout the period under scrutiny. Most notable and one of the earliest negative references made about motorcycling in *Hansard*, concerned the comments of Reverend Canon Greenwell, presiding magistrate at the Durham County Bench, in 1905. Whilst sentencing two motorcyclists for speeding, Canon Greenwell, stated that, '...it would not be a bad plan if some of them were shot.'¹⁴ This remark was sufficiently outrageous to be raised as part of a question in the House of Commons, by Mr. Bright (Liberal, Shropshire, Oswestry), who called for the magistrate to be removed from the commission of the peace. The then Secretary of State for the Home Department, Mr. Akers-Douglas, after having interviewed the magistrate, claimed he did not mean to be taken seriously, having merely

¹² <http://www.roadsafetyuk.co.uk/history1.htm> (Accessed: 18 April 2007). *The Locomotives Act*. 28 & 29 Vic., c. LXXXIII. This law, passed in 1865 and amended as the *Highways and Locomotives (Amendment) Act*. 41 & 42 Vic., c.LXXVII in 1878, was originally intended to allow steam traction engines to travel safely in built up areas. Its practicality ceased when quicker, lighter petrol-engined vehicles began to be used.

¹³ *The Locomotives on Highways Act*. 59 & 60 Vic., c.XXIX.

¹⁴ *Hansard*, Fourth Series, vol. 148, Jun 26th 1905 col.148.

made reference to an earlier comment of Lord Queensbury. No action was taken to remove the magistrate from office.

The chapter will show how the legislators came to be aware of the problems associated with motoring in general, and the particular emphasis made on aspects of motorcycling, to find out the extent to which government increased its control on motorised transport, which conversely will show the extent of the relative freedom road users had prior to the laws being enforced. It is also proposed that an analysis of the parliamentary debate regarding traffic and especially motorcycling be made, as it continued throughout the period, and to ascertain whether a definite pro and anti motorcycling lobby existed. Most of the parliamentary legislation passed during this period relevant to motoring was covered in two Acts, in 1920 and 1930.¹⁵ In addition to this the *Road Traffic Act* of 1934 is of relevance.¹⁶

The Ministry of Transport founded in 1919, was intended to be a replacement for the Road Board, set up in 1910 to administer grants paid to local authorities for road improvements. This shifted priorities from road maintenance to control of road user's and their vehicles.¹⁷ In 1920 the Motor Legislation Committee, a body consisting mainly of members of interested motoring groups, put forward a completed draft of what they termed, a 'Road Traffic Bill.'¹⁸ Despite some of the proposals eventually becoming law, this document

¹⁵ *Roads Act*. 10 & 11 Geo. V, c.LXXII, and the *Road Traffic Act*. 20 & 21 Geo. V, c.XLIII.

¹⁶ *Road Traffic Act*. 24 & 25 Geo. V, c.L,

¹⁷ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car...* p.120 The Ministry of Transport's first Minister was Sir Eric Geddes, a man whose sympathies lay more in railways than roads.

¹⁸ This was printed in *The Autocar* Aug 14th 1920 Its main provisions were the registration of vehicles; the licensing of all drivers, without a compulsory test; the abolition of speed limits, and the provision of laws concerning the punishment of road users who, through their negligence, or dangerous driving, put members of the public at risk. Endorsable offences such as reckless or drunken driving, were to be cancelled if no other offence occurred, after two years. That the proposed Bill was formulated by interested parties, is proved by a section, which recommended that motor vehicle theft was punishable by an up to ten year sentence, or fifteen years for a second offence.

appears to have been completely ignored at the time. The government were unwilling to accept or acknowledge this attempt by motoring organisations to self-regulate their pastime. Some of the reasons for this lie in the latter's attitude towards legislation. The AA for instance had been shown to be in opposition to the speed limit. Also, some sectors of the government persisted in considering the private car as frivolous.¹⁹ The extent to which motorcycling organisations such as the Auto Cycle Union influenced the proposed Bill is unclear, given that motorcyclists would generally be subjected to the same regulations with some qualifications, as other motorists. It is possible that motorcycling was considered to be some kind of poor relation in the field of transport, almost a toy to be used at weekends in a similar fashion to the position once claimed by the car.²⁰ This fallacy had proved difficult to correct despite attempts made from the turn of the century, an example of this being the founding by *The Autocar*, of a sister journal, *The Motor Cycle* in 1903.²¹

The 1920 *Roads Act* made several amendments to previous legislation.²² Part of this led to concerns being expressed by the industry, when their lighter machines were increased in weight due to being equipped with lighting sets, and horns as standard safety measures.²³

¹⁹ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car*... p.126.

²⁰ Ibid. p.161. Stenson-Cooke, doyen of the AA, claimed in 1920 that this was no longer the case for cars, in correspondence regarding the proposed petrol tax.

²¹ Barker, T., (ed.), *The Economic and Social Effects*... p.42.

²² Brunner, C. T., *The Problem of Motor Transport: An Economic Analysis*. (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1928). p. 135. The law amended *The Motor Car Act*. 3 Edw. VII, c.XXXVI, making it the duty of the local council to assign a separate number to every vehicle registered with them. Owners who did not display such a number clearly on their vehicle could be fined £20 for a first offence and up to £50 for a second. The high cost of the fines emphasise the importance, in the minds of the lawmakers, of regulating what was perceived as a growing problem. Such numbers were primarily used as a means of identifying owners or vehicles, mainly so they could be called to account for any misdemeanours committed on the road. This Act increased the regulation of motor vehicles by increasing the seriousness of the crime, as the costs show. It is not known whether the number of unregistered or fraudulently registered vehicles decreased as a result of this, although the seriousness with which the government took the crime is reflected in the cost of the fine. Vehicles were also required to be taxed yearly or for part of a year. Cars were taxed by a nominal horsepower, but motorcycles were taxed by weight. Machines under 200lb were taxed £1 ten shillings.

²³ The fitting of such instruments had previously been left to the discretion of the owner.

In 1928 Colonel Wilfred Ashley, the then Minister of Transport was asked by the industry to raise the dividing line between the two categories of motorcycle to 225lbs to accommodate these safety features, but declined, expressing a concern about loss of revenue.²⁴ An offshoot of this need to keep weight down to make the machine qualify for cheaper taxation, was the likelihood of the machine being made of a less sturdy construction, which would make it less reliable, and possibly more dangerous in an accident. Manufacturers had therefore to balance the need for lightness, with the need for safety. If a sidecar was added, an additional £1 was paid. There was some discussion regarding the positive safety aspects of sidecars and a great deal of parliamentary debate about pillion riding. The additional duty payable for sidecar use was criticised as an encouragement for pillion riding. One MP stated that a sidecar, ‘...had been proved to be the safest vehicle on the road,’ and should not be penalised in such a way.²⁵

A Royal Commission on Transport was appointed in 1928 and issued two reports, firstly concerned with traffic control on the roads and secondly with the introduction of compulsory third party insurance. Its findings were useful in compiling the legislation, following scrutiny by amongst others, the Motor Legislation Committee. The first report, in 1929, entitled ‘The Control of Traffic on Roads,’ recommended there be no speed limit, as they considered that the 20mph law was not observed by one motorist in a thousand,²⁶ the adoption of traffic lights, and a code for road users.²⁷ The *Road Traffic Act 1930* introduced a minimum age limit of 16 years for riders, who had previously been able to ride motorcycles at 14 years old.²⁸ Pillion riding was finally legalised in section 16 of the

²⁴ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 218, Jun 21st 1928 col.1746.

²⁵ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol.230, Jul 23rd 1929, col.1058.

²⁶ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car*...p.250.

²⁷ Command. 3365. The second report, entitled ‘The Co-ordination and Development of Transport’ was issued in 1931. Command 3751.

²⁸ *Road Traffic Act*. 20 & 21 Geo. V, c. XLIII section 9.

Act.²⁹ This reflects the seriousness by which this aspect of motorcycling was taken by legislators, primarily due to the concern expressed in much parliamentary debate, regarding accidents involving pillionists, at the time. It became illegal under section 20 of the Act, for the driver of any vehicle to withhold his name and address, when asked them by a police officer, and to fail to stop in case of accident, under section 22. These two parts of the Act underline the growing popularity of motoring. The days of the self-regulating elite drivers were over. In Part 2 of the Act, section 35 introduced compulsory third party insurance, which had hitherto been voluntary. When the subject of compulsory insurance was first put to the insurance companies, they reacted with suspicion. Their official body, the Accident Offices Association were opposed to any interference by government in the terms of contracts.³⁰ Whether this assumption was based upon social class bias or whether the standard of driving was being called into question because of fears that increased claims would raise premiums is unclear. If the former, then this is relevant as motorcycling was practised by a greater social spectrum. Lloyds had insured vehicles driven by working-class driver-mechanics employed by the well-off from the outset, and one of the scapegoats for road-hogging was the newly-rich, with more money than manners.³¹ The notion of insuring against accidents to other road users represents a serious amendment to traffic law because it further inhibits the sense of freedom of action, which had been an important aspect of the pastime. Motorists were now forced to take out a policy, which in effect placed the theoretic onus of blame upon them for accidents. Riders and drivers no longer had the option of taking to the roads without insurance, if they saw fit or were of a dubious enough character to do so. The seriousness with which

²⁹ Ibid section 16. One pillion rider was to be allowed, provided he or she was seated correctly astride the machine, and not, as sometimes was done by female pillionists, sitting sidesaddle. A fine of £5 for a first and £10 for a second offence was to be imposed.

³⁰ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car...* p.247. Lloyds had further misgivings, claiming that as the numbers of motorists increased, the class of driver would be worse.

³¹ O'Connell, S., *The Car...* p.121.

the government took the need for such insurance can be seen by the penalties for omission, which could be up to fifty pounds and a prison term.³² This was introduced as a result of pressure due to the increase in road accidents. The number of road accidents caused by vehicles had risen steadily from just over 49,000 in 1920 to 136,000 in 1930, which coincides with the general increase of motor vehicles on the roads.³³ These figures can be compared with those of the Standing Committee on Road Transport, which claimed that out of 164,000 people injured on the roads in 1928, almost 100,000 of them were not motorists but cyclists or pedestrians.³⁴ Figures regarding motorcycling deaths are not available for this time, although the rider was more likely to suffer serious injury than the driver, due to being more exposed.³⁵ Although the number of motorcycles in use never returned to its relative peak, which was attained at the start of the Twenties, road traffic in general boomed.³⁶ The total figure for deaths and injuries was 239,000 in 1934, which included 7,343 deaths, a figure not exceeded until 1964.³⁷ By 1933 motorcycles and cars were held to blame for 60% of road accidents, which increased to 80% in 1938.³⁸ It had previously been proposed, in the absence of a national health service, that part of the licence fee be set-aside for the benefit of hospitals.³⁹ The British Medical Association claimed that only about one in five doctors were paid for their services in motor related cases. In 1931 for instance 25,000 such cases were treated at an average cost of £10. The doctors received only £35,000 from the insurance companies as a result of claims.⁴⁰ No

³² *Road Traffic Act*, section 35.

³³ Emsley, C., "Mother, What did Policemen do, When There Weren't Any Motors?" *The Law, The Police And The Regulation of Motor Traffic in England, 1900 – 1939* in *The Historical Journal*, 36, 2 (1993), pp. 357-381.

³⁴ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol.240, Jul 22nd 1930 cols. 2105 – 7.

³⁵ Motorcyclists were not legally forced to wear crash helmets until 1973.

³⁶ Emsley, C., "Mother, What did Policemen do..." p.358. The number of passenger cars rose from 187,000 in 1920 to 1,056,000 in 1930.

³⁷ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car...* p.266.

³⁸ Great Britain. Parliament. House of Lords. (1938) *Report of Select Committee on Prevention of Road Accidents*. London: The Stationery Office. (HL 1938-1939 (35 & 192)).

³⁹ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol.230, Jul 25th 1929 col.1532.

⁴⁰ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car...* p.271.

incidences recorded in the Darlington magistrates' records for the interwar period, concern prosecutions for being without third party insurance. The increase in legislation was a deciding factor in the setting up of probably the first rider's rights organisation, the British Motor Cycle Association. Its primary concern, as stated as the first point of its Charter, was government control, and the compulsory nature of third party insurance.⁴¹ Membership of the Association allowed among other things, member access to an insurance policy from Lloyd's.⁴²

Part 3 of the 1930 *Road Traffic Act* introduced the notion of a formalised set of rules and advice for road users, with the publication of *The Highway Code*. The eventual introduction of this often-amended booklet again shows an increase in the perceived need by the government to be involved in traffic control. It was produced in collaboration with the RAC, who claim it to have been the brainchild of one of its long-serving Committee members, Mervin O'Gorman.⁴³ The rules in this edition concern drivers of all motor vehicles, and do not contain any specific to motorcyclists. Sections devoted to cyclists, some of which apply to the motorised version, pedestrians, and horse-users are also included.

Section 13 of the *Road Traffic Act* did not legally prevent the numerous forms of competition held by motorcycling clubs on the roads. If an element of speed entered into

⁴¹ *The Official Handbook of the British Motor Cycle Association 1937 – 8*. (London: British Motor Cycle Association, 1937). p.9.

⁴² *The Motor Cycle* Feb 21st 1935 p.245 Insurance was required under section 39 of the Act if a vehicle licence was to be obtained, and was to be produced if asked for by a police officer under section 40. These factors further increased the onus of responsibility of the rider to ensure the safety of other road users, as well as increasing the overall cost of motorcycle ownership. Section 40 increased the police's power over the motorist, as well as possibly the sense of indignation from some sectors of the riding public towards them when they exercised it.

⁴³ Brendon, P., *The Motoring Century: The Story of the Royal Automobile Club*. (London: Bloomsbury, 1997). p. 217. Another link to motorcycling exists here, as O'Gorman is quoted as considering riding motorcycles as being, '...the nearest approach to the thrill of hunting I know.'

reliability trials, for example, it did to the extent that the competitor had to remain within any existing speed limit. One part of the United Kingdom, which was to continue with motorcycle racing events on public roads, was the Isle of Man whose Tynwald Parliament saw fit to ignore this part of the Act, thus ensuring the continuance of the Tourist Trophy races. Similar races also continued in Northern Ireland. The popularity of these races as a tourist attraction and provider of revenue was noted in a question in Parliament in the summer of 1933.⁴⁴

The 1934 *Road Traffic Act*'s main effect upon motorcycling was its re-introduction of a speed limit for built up areas.⁴⁵ There was no upper limit outside towns at this time.⁴⁶ Driving tests were to become compulsory under the 1934 Act, commencing from 1st July 1935. The fee was ten shillings.⁴⁷ As a gauge of the general opinion of the motoring public regarding these laws, it is notable that of the 100,000 members returning a questionnaire issued by the AA, the majority considered a 30mph limit in towns to be acceptable, so long as it was confined to built-up areas with street lighting and supported the idea of driving tests.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 280, Jul 28th 1933 p.2961. . A Mr. Hales queried the Minister of Transport regarding the possibility of holding similar races on selected English roads. The positive aspects of encouraging continental tourists, both as racers and visitors were stressed, and such races promoted as being of benefit to distressed areas of the country. The idea was considered favourably by the Minister, but caused a general disapproving stir amongst the members, hinting at the general consensus of opinion held at this time.

⁴⁵ *Road Traffic Act*. 24 & 25 Geo. V, c.L. There was to be 30mph limit, and if convicted, a fine of not more than £20 for a first offence and £50 for a second was imposed. It came into effect on March 18th of 1935, and contrary to expectations, did not have an immediate effect on casualty figures, which remained stable, before rising again. Plowden, W., *The Motor Car*... p.281.

⁴⁶ <http://www.roadsafetyuk.co.uk/history1.htm> (Accessed: 18 April 2007). In 1965 a 50mph limit was introduced on trunk roads. In 1967 a 70mph limit was introduced for de-restricted roads.

⁴⁷ *Ibid* .

⁴⁸ Barty-King, H., *The AA: A History of the Automobile Association, 1905 – 1980*. (Basingstoke: Automobile Association, 1980). p.168.

It is appropriate here to mention how an apparent laxity of procedure about law-making concerning motorised transport at the start of the twentieth century, led to a major aspect of this law, taking a path it otherwise might not have. In July 1903, Lord Balfour of Burleigh,⁴⁹ the Secretary of State for Scotland, introduced the Motor Car Bill into the House of Lords. The Upper House held many members whose wealth allowed them to possess the most powerful cars in the kingdom, and who had reason not to be in favour of speed limits. Part of the Bill proposed the abolition of such limits apart from in towns, but due to an apparent lack of realisation of the importance of the document by members of the Upper House, by the end of its reading, a national 20mph limit for outside built-up areas was included as a clause within it.⁵⁰ By the time it came back to the House of Lords, it was the end of the parliamentary session. Rather than force an amendment, which would cause a delay, the Lords, apparently eager to return to their homes, allowed the Bill through, inadvertently sowing the seed, which would cause much friction between the police, magistrates, and the motoring public for almost the next thirty years. The Bill became the *Motor Car Act*, 1903 (3 Edward VII, c.XXXVI) and came into force in January of the next year.⁵¹ The above laws were introduced as a result of a perceived need for increased regulation over the growing number of motorised vehicular traffic. The second part of this chapter will show the forces that were at work in formulating the above laws. Pressure groups such as safety campaigners, driving organisations and the industry all had a role to play in this process.

⁴⁹ Who was the cousin of the Prime Minister.

⁵⁰ Barty-King, H., *The AA...* p.50.

⁵¹ Ibid.

The number of accidents on British roads was of increasing concern during the period in question.⁵² Towards the end of the 1920s, over 6000 people were being killed on the roads each year.⁵³ Half of these were pedestrians. Pressure groups had since the dawn of the motoring age, been divided into two camps, the pedestrian and the motorist. Amongst the most vehemently anti-motoring, and through this anti-motorcycling elements was the Pedestrians' Association, founded by Lord Cecil in 1929.⁵⁴ On the other side were organisations such as the Road Improvement Association, based around cycling, founded as early as 1886, the RAC, (originally the Automobile Club of 1897) and the AA, (1905). All of these organisations had members of wealth and power, who were well versed in how to influence governments, although it was the RAC which appeared to most ably represent the interests of the upper classes, being from its inception run along the lines of a gentleman's club, and only later catering for the needs of the 'touring motorist' as opposed what they referred to as 'sportsmen'.⁵⁵

One of the main areas pertinent to this study, that provoked parliamentary comment during this period, was the legality of taking a passenger on a solo motorcycle. A review of *Hansard*, Fifth Series, revealed that discussing pillion riding took up a good deal of parliamentary time. It was claimed many times, that the majority of motorcycle accidents were caused by improperly seated pillion riders. The subject was discussed during the 1920s and 30s on sixteen separate occasions. The primary reason for such questioning was to ascertain the number of road accidents involving pillion riders with a view towards preventing such accidents by legislating against the practice. Despite the question being

⁵² <http://www.roadsafetyuk.co.uk/history1.htm> (Accessed: 18 April 2007). The first fatal motor accident in which the driver was killed occurred in London in February 1899.

⁵³ Hamer, M. *Wheels Within Wheels...* p.31.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Brendon, P., *The Motoring Century...* p.10. This organisation later saw the need for associate members, those with less social cache to have their own section within the club and is the part of the club which most motorists join.

asked consistently by various members, it was not answered satisfactorily until late 1937, when Mr. Lipson asked the Minister of Transport, Mr. Burgin, to state the number of persons killed and injured while pillion riding in the last twelve months. The figure stated of 159 or 2.9% of the 6697 total fatalities and 226,402 injuries due to road casualties in this year was small in comparison to the apparent amount of concern expressed.⁵⁶

Although proprietary pillion seats had been available for many years, it was often the practice of pillion riders to sit upon a cushion tied to the rear rack of the machine. This was illegal under section 16 of the *Road Traffic Act* of 1930. Much of the problem originated in pillion rides, given on the spur of the moment, or irregularly, by riders not used to the extra weight of the passenger. This adds fuel to the theory that much of the opposition to motorcycling in Parliament stemmed from concerns regarding safety.

Alternatively, such concern raises questions regarding the moral views of the MPs. There appears to have been an inherent sense that pillion riding, when the pillionist was female was immoral. The type of girl, who would ride on the rear of a motorcycle, was somehow considered to be more at risk than the one who would go for a drive in her boyfriend's car.⁵⁷ A safe seating position as opposed to riding side-saddle would have been seen as less risqué. Also, in most cases it was essential that the pillion held the rider.

It is now appropriate to turn towards governmental attitudes to motorcycling. Were there specific pro and anti-motorcycling lobbies active in Parliament at this time as some modern rider's rights organisations claim is true of today's Parliament?⁵⁸ This appears not to be the case. An investigation of the people who raised questions on motorcycling and their motives gives an insight into the forces apparent in the legislative processes of the

⁵⁶ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 328, Nov 10th 1937 col.1782.

⁵⁷ O'Connell, S., *The Car...* p.93. Middle class courtship was enhanced by the provision of a motorcar, which showed the affluence of the potential husband. Motorcycles were cheaper and more readily available to lower classes of society.

⁵⁸ Such as the Motorcycle Action Group and the British Motorcyclist's Federation.

time.⁵⁹ There were 17 members of Parliament who put questions to the government regarding the legality of pillion riding during the period in question.⁶⁰ The relevant Minister of Transport usually but not always answered the questions. Of the members doing this at this time three were knighted, and three military men.⁶¹

There were two main themes regarding the 'pillion question.' Primarily, the questioner sought to ascertain the number of accidents, which could be attributed to pillionists being on motorcycles, usually with a view towards banning the practice. Secondly, it was thought that a definite regulation should be passed as to what constituted a pillion seat. This had been done in section 16 of the *Road Traffic Act* of 1930. At the same time, the industry thought it necessary to discuss the legal definition of pillion seats. A meeting of the British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturers Traders Union discussed the design of such seats to be fitted as standard equipment on newly manufactured machines. Mr. F. H. Ottignon of J. B. Brooks, the saddle makers, chaired the meeting.⁶² Questions regarding motorcycle safety were not party political in nature. Instead, they were posed by MPs who were in a position to do so, after being consulted by members of the public who had expressed concerns on the subject in the usual manner.

The remaining motorcycling related statements in *Hansard*, reveal the overall concerns in government for the subject and its control. A brief analysis of what was discussed during

⁵⁹ During the period in question the government changed several times, and most notably, the country was run by a National Government coalition from 1931 – 37. This was brought about as a result of the need to pool resources to recover from the economic depression. From 1916- 1922, the Liberals were in power followed by Labour from 1923 - 1924. From 1924 – 1929 at a time when motor vehicles were increasing in use, the Conservatives held office. Labour governed from 1929 – 1931. After the National Government, the Conservatives came to power until 1940.

⁶⁰ As a perusal of *Hansard*, Fifth Series, 1919 – 1939 shows.

⁶¹ Sir A. Warren (Con.); Sir Henry Cowan (Con.); Sir Henry Samuel (Lib.); Major Breeze; Capt. Tudor-Rees and Colonel Woodcock. Others were, Mr. Clough; Mr. Mosley; Mr. R. Young; Mr. Burgess; Mr. Penny; Mr. E. Roberts; Mr. Forest; Mr. Herbert Morrison (Who both asked questions and answered in his later role of Minister of Transport in the National Government.) Mr. Mills; Mr. Freeman and Mr. Lipson.

⁶² Warwick University Modern Records Centre, MSS 204/1/1/9 p.1552.

this time, will show these areas of concern to be concentrated upon the following subjects. Firstly, apart from pillion riding, the most debated subject was noise. Efficient silencers were usually fitted as standard equipment to machines, but could be altered easily by owners, under the mistaken impression that an increase in noise meant more engine power.⁶³ As early as 1912 the President of the Local Government Board issued a regulation prohibiting tampering with silencers. This regulation was often unknown or overlooked by the police and disregarded by motorists and motorcyclists.⁶⁴ Much discussion took place between the Ministry of Transport and the industry body, the BCMCMTU, and all that could be done to improve silencing was done. It was a common practice for some motorists and motorcyclists to fit what was known as a 'cut out' to their silencers, which in effect by-passed them allowing free passage of exhaust gasses as well as noise. Officials both within the movement and the industry frowned upon this practice.⁶⁵ Such was the extent of the problem of motorists and motorcyclists flaunting the law regarding silencing, that it was taken up as a personal cause by one of the most famous politicians of the time, William Joynson-Hicks at the Home Office. In 1927 he urged the Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, to '...exterminate the nuisance.'⁶⁶ Upon receiving a letter of complaint from a manufacturer regarding the extent to which the law was being imposed, Joynson-Hicks claimed to have received more letters of support for his action, than for almost any other matter in his political career.⁶⁷ A meeting of the BCMCMTU in 1930 brought to light the suggestion that the trade seek some form of type certificate, as was the practice in Germany, in order that they could comply with the *Road*

⁶³ An efficient silencer, especially on a two-stroke machine will increase the engine's power by means of the control of air pressure.

⁶⁴ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 122, Dec 4th 1919 col.629.

⁶⁵ Brendon, P., *The Motoring Century*...p.100.

⁶⁶ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car*... p.230.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Traffic Act definition of silencing.⁶⁸ Following a report by a Committee on Vehicle Noise in 1937, entitled '*First Interim Report of the Departmental Committee on Noise in the Operation of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles*,⁶⁹ the manufacturers undertook that no motorcycle would be produced that created excessive noise, for use on public roads, although the idea of what constituted excessive noise was still subjective.⁷⁰ 'The onus of responsibility to ensure the quietness of the machine lay with its owner.'⁷¹ The amount of debate regarding noise gives the impression that it was considered to be excessively obtrusive, in a land (or Parliament) still hankering towards the relative quiet and slower pace of the horse. The '*Noise in the Operation of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles*' third interim report, of 1937, recommended that vehicles that could not pass a prescribed noise test should not be used on public roads.⁷² Noise legislation was also provided under the *Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations* of 1931.⁷³ The measurement of vehicular noise on the road by the police appears to have been by purely subjective means, as there was no portable equipment in general use for this purpose at this time. Laboratory equipment in the form of audiometers could be used, working along the principle of the tested silencer's noise being converted into an electrical impulse that registered on a dial, although their bulk prevented their use. Despite this, prosecutions for making excessive noise continued to be made throughout this period.⁷⁴ In the Metropolitan Police area noise

⁶⁸ Warwick University Modern Records Centre, MSS 204/1/1/9 p.1524.

⁶⁹ Great Britain. Ministry of Transport. (1937) *Noise in the Operation of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles first interim report*. London: The Stationery Office.

⁷⁰ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 334, Apr 4th 1938 col.34.

⁷¹ Sir William Joynson-Hicks, speaking in Parliament, Aug. 2nd 1926. *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 198, col.2626, and Mr Lovat-Fraser, *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 255, Jul 23rd 1931 col.1777.

⁷² <http://www.bopcris.ac.uk/bopall/ref8254.html> (Accessed: 18 April 2007)

⁷³ Great Britain. Ministry of Transport. (1931) *Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations*. London: The Stationery Office. Reg. 70 stated: 'No person shall use on a road any motor vehicle in such a manner as to cause any excessive noise which could have been avoided by the exercise of reasonable care on the part of the driver.' Note use of the term 'excessive.' Reg. 16 concerned silencers, and again used the subjective term 'reasonable.'

⁷⁴ *Motor Cycling* Oct 4th 1922 p.648 held an article on such a device being used for the defence of a case. The defence failed when the offending silencer was tested against one from a machine that in the subjective opinion of the Bench was too noisy, illustrating the lack of scientific approach in such circumstances.

prosecutions for all transport for 1926 ran to 9575. Between the years 1927-1928 this rose to 13,574.⁷⁵ According to Plowden, the figures for 1929 and 1930 for this area were 16,400 and 18,600 respectively.⁷⁶ Nationally the picture appears to be slightly better, from the point of view of the persistent offender. During 1930 and 1931 there were 23,468 and 21,062 respectively in England and Wales.⁷⁷ This might mean that police outside the London Metropolitan area were less concerned with traffic policing, or more probably there were proportionately more vehicles in the London area than elsewhere.⁷⁸ Towards the end of the period under discussion, the noise situation was in the process of being resolved, mainly through the industry agreeing upon set limits for silencing. An industrial committee recommended that after August 1936 no motor vehicle should be offered for sale unless its loudness at 30mph, 18 feet laterally from mid-point of the vehicle was no greater than 90 phons, and no greater than 95 phons, 18 feet from behind the silencer.⁷⁹ This effort at self-regulation took into account the fact that vehicles tend to be less noisy in motion than whilst stationary and removed any liability on the part of the motor industry in any future prosecutions.⁸⁰

Speed was another area of concern during this period. Some MPs expressed concern about motorists ignoring the 20mph limit, whilst others pressed for its abolition.⁸¹ The police used a primitive method at the time to ascertain whether a speeding offence was occurring.

⁷⁵ Ibid Mar 17th 1927 p.216 and Jun 7th 1928 p.354.

⁷⁶ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car...* p.230.

⁷⁷ Hansard Fifth Series, vol. 275, Mar 9th 1933 col.1325.

⁷⁸ An analysis of Darlington Magistrates records regarding this will be seen below.

⁷⁹ *Engineering* Nov 1st 1935 p.478. The use of phons as a measurement unit relates to the relative sound level in dB at 1000HZ. e.g. 70 phons = 70 dB at 1000 Hz.

⁸⁰ Such issues remain important to riders' rights organisations. The Motorcycle Action Group maintains that 'Loud Pipes Save Lives'. This is not a new concept. *Road Rider, Hints and Tips for Motor Cyclists*. (London: Iliffe & Sons Ltd., 1920), tip number 259, claimed that when the first completely silent motorcycle is produced, '...it will kill its inventor unless it first betrays him into manslaughter.'

⁸¹ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 130, Jun 18th 1920 col.1209. A Mr. Davison equated deaths caused by speeding motorists as 'murder.' In November of the same year (vol. 134, Nov 11th p.1402) a Mr. Doyle pressed for the abolition of the limit. It is an example of the amount of time taken to formulate British law that it was not abolished until 1930.

This involved two officers standing a measured distance along the roadside. At the approach of a vehicle, the officer that it passed first would signal to the other, who would start a stopwatch and time the vehicle, stopping it if it had exceeded the limit. This practice was sometimes used deceptively, with the police concealing themselves and was a major factor leading to the founding of the Automobile Association.⁸² A parliamentary question led to the efficiency of this process being analysed. For the London Metropolitan area, during autumn weekends in 1920, the number of police speed traps in operation was analysed. This was compared with cases where police officers not specifically on traffic duty noted such offences:

Table 4.1. *Speed controls in Metropolitan area, autumn 1920.*

Weekend	No. of Controls	No. of officers Employed	No. of cases of excessive speed Reported	No. of cases of dangerous driving reported by police on ordinary duty
14-16 August	86	85	142	6
21-23 August	85	80	167	3
28-30 August	65	62	101	1
4-6 September	0	0	0	3
11-13 September	0	0	0	5
18-20 September	0	0	0	3
25-27 September	2	3	0	3
2-4 October	2	5	3	4
9-11 October	2	5	2	7
16-18 October	2	3	5	3
23-25 October	2	3	5	3
Total:	246	246	425	41

Source: *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 134, Nov 1st 1920 col. 55.

⁸² See Barty-King, H., *The AA...*

If these figures are to be taken at face value, they show being caught for speeding by the police in the London area to be a relatively rare occurrence, considering the number of controls in operation, each control finding only one or two offenders per weekend. One possible reason for this might lie in the efficiency of the Automobile Associations saluting policy.⁸³ Police resources were not being used efficiently. Another area that was mentioned was the habit of police block summonsing.⁸⁴ Other issues included in Hansard concerned driving tests, licensing, road traffic accidents, and matters pertaining to the industry, such as production costs incurred as a result for the need to add ancillary items such as lighting, and revenue from import duty of British machines into India.⁸⁵

As the above has dealt generally with the formulation of the law, through parliamentary legislation, and given some insight into the various forces at work within the system, it is proposed that the next part of the chapter deals with the implementation of the law, and its interpretation, by its enforcers, the police. The importance of traffic regulation is made notable by its definition and implementation being included in one of the most popular of police guidance manuals of the time, devoting almost a quarter of its content to the subject.⁸⁶ The increase in regulations left many police as unsure about what was and was not legal, as it did the motorist who came into contact with them. One of the main areas of uncertainty, as far as the police were concerned were the legal niceties of lighting on motorcycles. Many queries appeared in their journal regarding the positioning of lights

⁸³ If an AA patrolman passed a member and did not salute, the member was advised to stop him and ask why. This was means by which the patrolman could inform the member about a police patrol ahead, without being seen to obstruct the police.

⁸⁴ For further analysis of this practice, see page 174.

⁸⁵ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 292, Jul 11th 1934 col.312. Imports of foreign lightweight machines were to be a subject of concern. See Chapter One p.25 comparing German exports there.

⁸⁶ Moriarty, C.C.H., *Police Law: An Arrangement of Law and Regulations for the Use of Police Officers*. (London: Butterworth & Co., 1935). 100 of its 450 pages are devoted to the subject.

and their requirement on sidecars as well as solo machines.⁸⁷ The subject of lighting on motorcycles is of interest because it is one area where their close links and origins with the bicycle are apparent in legal matters. These important safety aspects were not clearly defined, and therefore open to much interpretation, despite attempts at regulation, originating before the dawn of motorised transport, first made law in *The Local Government Act* of 1888.⁸⁸ Such legislation, as well as later attempts, was strongly influenced by organisations representing what was then the fastest form of road transport, the bicycle. The main relevant organisation of this sport was the Cyclists Touring Club. Up until 1914 it was maintained at least by the motoring organisations that motorcycles were honorary bicycles and that in solo form they did not legally require rear lights to illuminate number plates. They did require a reflector.⁸⁹ It was also required that the motorcycle had one of its number plates illuminated during the hours of darkness, although it did not paradoxically matter if it was the front or rear. Motorcyclists could strangely be prosecuted for obscuring their rear number plate in daylight, but not at night.⁹⁰

The increase in traffic, put many members of the public into unfortunate contact with the police, who would normally have very little to do with them. An urge towards courteous behaviour in order that the police were not to be seen as tools of oppression, appeared in their journal soon after the implementation of the 1930 *Road Traffic Act*.⁹¹ In giving evidence before the Royal Commission, the Metropolitan Police were in two minds about

⁸⁷ *The Police Review and Parade Gossip*'s correspondents appear to be concerned mainly with whether lights, should illuminate number plates, and how many there should be on a sidecar, and where positioned.

⁸⁸ *The Local Government Act*. 51 & 52 Vic., c. XLI.

⁸⁹ Brendon, P., *The Motoring Century*... p.164.

⁹⁰ *The Motor Cyclist Review* Apr 1927 p.718.

⁹¹ *The Police Review and Parade Gossip*, May 15th 1931 p.407. The writer observed that most traffic offenders were generally honest people with a respect for the law, who had offended due to, '...a temporary relaxation of their usual vigilance, and sometimes through an excusable ignorance of the law.'

the enforcement of speed limits. Despite seeing no alternative to them as a means of controlling traffic, given that speed itself causes accidents, they recognised the harm the imposition of an unpopular law had upon the relationship they had with the public.⁹² Previously to this, *The Police Journal* writer, H. Aker Tripp acknowledged the problem that since the advent of the motorcar the police had been, ‘... put in the position of disciplining the general public to an extent almost unprecedented.’⁹³ It was thought that the police reputation for being monuments of, ‘solid and tolerant commonsense’ was being eroded by the need to be ‘a stickler for trifles.’⁹⁴ This was equally relevant in their dealings with motorcyclists. The ability to give the offending motorists a caution instead of instigating proceedings against them, was an option the police had in cases when it was not considered necessary to proceed further. This could result in the offender being less inclined towards criticism of the law’s implementation, although caution was again advised in the police press.⁹⁵ One writer noted the means to which the police would resort to control the speeding motorist, during the 1930s, using loudspeakers and gongs in built up areas, to alert the motorist regarding their misdemeanour. These would be used to summon the offender to the side of the road, where his actions would be discussed.⁹⁶ Another aspect of the situation, which has a ring of familiarity in contemporary times, was a perceived need amongst high-ranking officialdom for an increase in the number of police. This was brought about by the need for them to be used to control traffic. An example of the expression of this need is found in the letter book of the Chief Constable of Huntingdonshire in 1924, who claimed that in his area, ‘The only men I have here – with

⁹² Plowden, W., *The Motor Car*... p.253.

⁹³ Emsley, C., ‘“Mother, What did Policemen do, When There Weren’t Any Motors?” The Law, The Police And The Regulation of Motor Traffic in England, 1900 – 1939’ in *The Historical Journal*, 36, 2 (1993). p.375.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *The Police Review and Parade Gossip*, Apr 29th 1932 p.334. Here, the police officer was advised not to take notes of the offender in his pocket book, rather to make mental notes and write them up later, so as not to offend.

⁹⁶ Jenkins, A., *The Thirties*. (London: Heinemann, 1976). p.105.

the exception of the sergeant – have to be constantly on point duty.’⁹⁷ As 1924 represents a relative peak in the numbers of motorcycles on the roads, it is likely that quite a lot of their work concerned controlling two-wheelers. The claim that more police were needed came as a result of reports by them of escalating crime statistics, which was a result of a post war change in government policy, whereby the Exchequer became their paymaster and froze police numbers. In effect the police created the impression of being needed by finding more crime, especially of the indictable motoring variety.⁹⁸

The 1930 *Road Traffic Act*, as has been mentioned previously, removed the speed limit outside built up areas. It put in place the offence of careless driving and it became the individual police officer’s duty to consider what this constituted. In order that a deterioration of the by now, traditional poor relationship between police and motorists be eliminated, or at least reduced, in 1936, the then Transport Minister, Mr. Hore-Belisha, (most famous for his pedestrian crossings), introduced the idea of a special corps of police road patrols, whose job it was to educate road users into a higher standard of road-sense. These police, who became known as ‘Courtesy Cops’ due to their habit of giving verbal warnings rather than summons, were often motorcycle mounted. They were 800 in number, were paid for by the Exchequer, and operated mainly in Lancashire and the surrounding counties, and London and Essex.⁹⁹ The scheme lasted only until the outbreak of the Second World War, but gave the police valuable experience of how to deal with motorists. Also, according to an article in *The Police Review*, clause 54 of the 1930 Act allowed for the organisation of a mobile police force, which by July 1931 constituted 684

⁹⁷ Emsley, C., *The English Police: A Political and Social History*. (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991). p.140.

⁹⁸ Taylor, H., ‘Forging the job. A crisis of modernization or redundancy for the police in England and Wales’, *British Journal of Criminology*, 39 (1999) pp.113 – 135.

⁹⁹ Critchley, T. A., *A History of Police in England and Wales*. (London: Constable, 1970). p.203.

vehicles in 120 local authorities in England and Wales, and 60 vehicles in Scotland.¹⁰⁰ It is not known how many were motorcycles, but such machines were considered useful in a motor vehicle control role, rather than in the pursuit of escaping criminals, who sometimes were in possession of sports cars.¹⁰¹

What did the motorcyclists think of the way their pastime was being controlled by officialdom? If this question can be answered, it will give some insight into the general opinion of riders regarding the increase in governmental control of their pastime. Motorcyclist's opinions and reactions to these laws are of particular interest, as their instigation may have conflicted with the general air of freedom, which the motorcycle gave to the rider. To analyse this concept, it is necessary that a mixture of oral testimony and contemporary journals be consulted. The general opinion of the interviewees was that the police were generally helpful towards motorcyclists, although this depended upon the area in which you lived. For those motorcyclists living in small towns or villages, the local police operated on a more personal level than those working in larger towns and cities. It appears to be a case of the local, 'Bobby' knowing the rider, and sometimes but not always turning a blind eye to the offence, provided the circumstances permitted. Although never official policy, this appears to have been a national trait. One interviewee grew up in rural Wales, and began riding in the 1930s. He claimed that in his area, there was very little evidence of police at all, and if any contact was made with them, they behaved in a 'Gentlemanly' manner towards the rider:

¹⁰⁰ *The Police Review and Parade Gossip*, July 31st 1931 p.639. A quotation of the Minister of Transport.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* July 21st 1933 p.51.

‘I found them quite gentlemanly; never had the slightest bit bother with them. They didn’t bother us. They never chased us, or anything like that. No, we had no problems with them whatsoever.’¹⁰²

Another, who rode in the Yorkshire Dales, claims that there was no real animosity between police and motorcyclists, ‘... unless you were a tearaway.’

‘Mostly, they, (the police) were very co-operative. The ones I came across, especially. You did get the odd idiot motorcyclist of course, and they became known to the police.’¹⁰³

Another, who rode in her father’s sidecar in the 1930s in the Crook area, claims that the local police ‘knew everybody’ and made allowances:

‘Oh, they were most helpful. Everybody was very helpful, especially because, em, there were so many people on board the thing, (double adult sidecar).’¹⁰⁴

A rider based in Wolsingham and Barnard Castle, reports an incident where, again the local police made allowances for the state of the roads, wiping his dust-covered number plate clean, after he had been stopped at a speed trap:

‘The policeman wiped his plate and said, ‘It’s just a light covering of dust, sergeant, the number’s good to see.’’¹⁰⁵

In a separate incident, a policeman stopped him after seeing his lights fuse, advising him not to ride any further, and overlooking the fact that he did, as it was late at night and the rider had to reach home:

¹⁰² Respondent 7: born Monmouthshire 1924.

¹⁰³ Respondent 3: born Leeds 1916.

¹⁰⁴ Respondent 5: born Crook, County Durham 1926.

¹⁰⁵ Respondent 4: born Woodland, County Durham, 1910.

'The policeman said, not to leave without a light. When I later passed the policeman, he didn't stop me because, he was sensible and good-hearted enough to let us past.'¹⁰⁶

The rider recalls that the police were not always willing to follow the law, if it inconvenienced them, as a tale of a pillion ride shows:

'The policeman put the pushbike upside down between us, and we rode back into Woodland.'¹⁰⁷

In these relatively small communities, it appears that the police tended to be more concerned with the spirit of the law than the letter of it. This might have been an intentional move on the part of the police, another example of the perceived need to keep on friendly terms with the local population. In 1925 a report of the Committee of Representatives of Police Forces in Great Britain, and of Road Users, appointed to consider and report on traffic problems, discussed this matter.¹⁰⁸ The seriousness to which the police attributed this matter is also illustrated by the intolerance shown to one off-duty policeman, who was prosecuted by his Superintendent, for carrying a lady passenger on his machine.¹⁰⁹

Motorcycling journals can also give an insight into the relationship between the police and the rider. *Ixion* noted that a motorcyclist was less likely to be stopped for speeding, if he or she was not, in the objective opinion of the policeman, riding to endanger themselves or other members of the public. It also helped if the policeman in question might be seen as

¹⁰⁶ Respondent 4: born Woodland, County Durham, 1910.

¹⁰⁷ Respondent 4: born Woodland, County Durham, 1910. This contributor had to give a ride to a police officer after being stopped for no reason. The police officer balanced a bicycle on his knee. This was at a time when, he claimed it had just become a legal requirement that pillion riders be insured. (circa 1930).
¹⁰⁸ <http://www.bopcris.ac.uk/bopall/ref8242.html> (Accessed: 18 April 2007). Great Britain. Committee of Representatives of Police Forces in Great Britain and of Road Users. (1925) *Report*. London: The Stationery Office.

¹⁰⁹ *The Motor Cycle*, Nov 10th 1927 p.871 This may be seen as a sort of test case. The superintendent of Lancashire Police took a member of his force to court. He was acquitted, but it was agreed that the case should have been brought.

having a common understanding with the rider. In this case the patrolman was mounted on a motorcycle himself.¹¹⁰ *The Motor Cyclist Review* harboured a grudge in its editorial column expressing a feeling that motorcyclists were being given more than a fair share of attention from the government and police. They, the magazine claimed, were treated as criminals, in that they had to carry a licence, ‘...like ticket of leave men,’ the penalty for leaving it at home being eight times its cost. Criminals, it was said wore broad arrows; the motorcyclist a number plate. A constable could consider them to be ‘driving to the danger of the public,’ on a completely deserted road.¹¹¹ The same magazine had earlier called for Parliament to bring out a series of police reforms to rectify the situation where, ‘... the majority of cases are absurd and a disgrace to English justice.’ Here, it was claimed, the policeman had every incentive to bring as many cases as he could, as every successful one against a motorist was another step on the constable’s road to promotion. Such articles suggest that this relatively short-lived journal was somewhat more radical in its assertions than the more established ones.¹¹² It is also possible that it was attempting to sensationalize the subject to sell copy.

One aspect of the process of implementing traffic law that warranted much criticism and came under the scrutiny of Parliament was the practice, by the police of block-summonsing. This involved bringing motorists who had violated the same part of traffic law, to appear in court en masse. Instead of appearing before a magistrate on a day as close to that of the offence as possible, such offenders were forced to appear at a date, which might have been several weeks or months after the offence took place. This was meant to be a time saving exercise for the legal system, but it placed the motorist at the

¹¹⁰ *The Motor Cycle*, Apr 23rd 1931 p.594.

¹¹¹ *The Motor Cyclist Review* Oct 1930 p.151.

¹¹² *Ibid*, Aug 1928 p.57.

disadvantage of there being time to forget the circumstances which led to the incident. Such occurrences of block-summonsing occur in the Darlington records, which could suggest they were widespread nationally. They were common enough to warrant a question in the House of Commons by Captain Strickland, who asked the then Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd, if he was aware and approved of the practice. The Minister gave the not unusual reply in the negative.¹¹³

Having first analysed some of the factors and details of legislation and its implementation and the reception it received amongst the motorcycling public, it is now proposed that a detailed breakdown of prosecutions be made. Records of Darlington magistrates shall be used to form a snapshot of the national picture. There appears to have been some evidence of anti-motorcycling bias amongst magistrates, persisting into the inter-war period, which colours this analysis. In 1932, Mr. Laski, the Chairman of Manchester City magistrates, made known his views, that motorcyclists were, ‘... a danger and a pest on the road,’ and that they should be driven off the roads by insurance companies refusing to insure them.¹¹⁴ The *Evening Standard* condemned these *obiter dicta* comments, as they were made from the privileged platform of the police court bench and they were likely to be accepted by the less well-informed members of the community, which might include some rural police forces, and endowed with an official authority to which they had no claim.¹¹⁵ Another example of such overreaction to motorcycling occurred in 1924 when the Newcastle Watch Committee to the City Council urged that pillion riding should be made illegal.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 311, Apr 22nd 1936 col. 144.

¹¹⁴ *The Motor Cycle*, Oct 6th 1932. p.386.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* Dec 11th 1924.

It has been said that the regulation and implementation of transport law, placed the motorist and motorcyclist, if apprehended and prosecuted, in a situation to which he or she was unfamiliar, and would not have the experience to cope with the situation in the most logical way.¹¹⁷ Some attempts were made in the motorcycling press, to forearm riders with advice regarding how to conduct themselves in a police court. Knowledge of key points of court proceedings, and the ability to keep a cool head, were considered vital, if the rider was to leave the court, feeling that justice had been done. It is understandable that being placed in a situation where they were under close scrutiny, the majority of riders would find it almost impossible to conduct themselves in such a manner.¹¹⁸ Being in the position to give their members legal advice was considered from the outset to be a major concern of both the main motoring organisations. This was because of fervent opposition to motoring by legislators, and the police, which existed at the dawn of the twentieth century and prior to it. The RAC had from as early as 1907, a Legal Department giving its members free advice with civil claims and assisting in criminal cases.¹¹⁹ The AA, whose origins were derived from a need to dodge speed traps on the London to Brighton road, had a legal defence fund, which began in 1906. Members wishing to benefit from this paid an annual capitation of two guineas, which entitled them to representation and payment of all lawyers' fees.¹²⁰ Although these organisations were primarily for the benefit of motorcar drivers, by the inter-war period, membership was never restricted to them. It is not known how many motorcyclists were members of one or other of these organisations.

Magistrates during this period were appointed from well-off sectors of society, such as the clergy, high-ranking military or upper class gentry. Some examples of magistratorial

¹¹⁷ *The Motor Cyclist Review*, Jan 1927 p. 630.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Brendon, P., *The Motoring Century...* p.148.

¹²⁰ Barty-King, H., *The AA...* p.86.

attitudes towards motorcycling have already been cited, although it is claimed that their attitude towards some motoring offences had changed towards the end of the period. This was due to magistrates having personal experience of motoring law through car ownership.¹²¹ The extent to which magistrates' imposition of motoring law was affected by personal motorcycle ownership is not known, although they would have been officially impartial. It is possible that many had experience of them, due to their availability and popularity. It would have been useful to identify some of those involved in administering traffic law and assess their personal acquaintance with motorcycles. This is not possible as it was the practice that the magistrate sitting in a particular case identified themselves in the record books not by signature, but by initials.¹²²

The Darlington records are available from 1920 to 1932 and from 1936 to 1939, for the time span of this study with 1933 to 1935 being unavailable. The offences broadly coincide with a modern approach to the administration of motoring legislation.¹²³ An analysis of the frequency of various offences reveals differences in emphasis. Firstly, considering the speed restrictions in force for most of the period, it would be logical to assume, given the power development of the machines, and the sporting and *laissez faire* attitude of most riders, that speeding would be the main cause of court appearance. This, if the 'Non-Specific' offences of the last two years under scrutiny can be considered not to include a majority of speeding offences, is not the case.

Prosecutions for speeding could have represented a lucrative addition to funding if the local magistrates had the opportunity to make more of them. That this is not the case in the

¹²¹ O'Connell, S., *The Car...* p.133.

¹²² The final column of the ledger contains these.

¹²³ See list of offences in appendix 7.

Darlington area, suggest that the police either did not have the resources to prosecute all speeders in a country with a national speed limit of 20mph, or that they unofficially acknowledged the limit to be unfeasibly low. In 1929 the maximum fine was £10 although the average fine nationally was just over £2.¹²⁴ The 1930 *Road Traffic Act* radically changed magistrate's powers, whilst at the same time relaxing some outdated restrictions for the motorist. In 1935 the maximum fine could be £20 although the average was just over £1.¹²⁵ This at a time when such prosecutions would have been made for speeding in built up areas, as there were no restrictions elsewhere, leads to the question of why did magistrates consider it less important to uphold a law forbidding exceeding 30mph in towns, than it had previously to forbidding exceeding 20mph anywhere? This may have been because the old speed limit was widely regarded as useless or even dangerous, speed being considered less of a problem than the manner of driving undertaken.¹²⁶ Another possible reason lies in the fact that fines for these and similar indictable offences no longer swelled the resources of the local authority, but went straight into the Road Fund.¹²⁷

Magistrates at Darlington appear to have been more concerned with the correct fitting, number, and efficiency of lights on motorcycles at this time. The offender was usually charged two separate fines for front and rear lights if applicable, the usual fine being, (in 1928), 10/- or 7days, or 15/- or 10days in prison.¹²⁸ Lighting offence prosecutions occur most frequently in the data gathered:

¹²⁴ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car...* p.454.

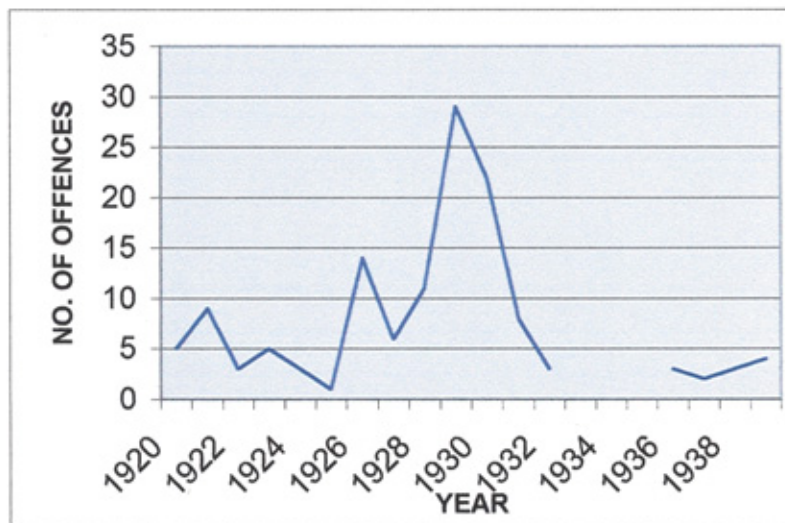
¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 252.

¹²⁷ Taylor, H., 'Forging the job. A crisis of modernization or redundancy for the police in England and Wales,' *British Journal of Criminology*, 39 (1999). p.126 'These particular fines do not swell the resources of the local authority which has to maintain the police, but go to the Road Fund, so the offending driver has the satisfaction of knowing that his money may be used in making the road even more like a racing track.'

¹²⁸ Durham County Records Office. Ref. Ps/Da/B5 to B13.

Table 4.2. *Prosecutions for lighting offences.*



Source: Durham County Records Office. Ref. Ps/Da/B5 to B13.

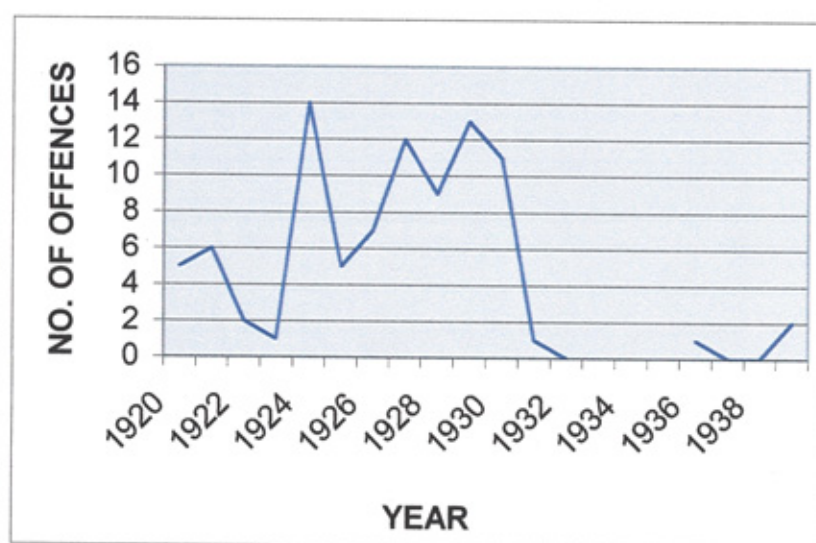
Various forms of licence abuse account for the second highest frequency of offence during the period. It was accepted practice for the police officer to ask for it to be produced, when a motorist was stopped for any perceived breach of traffic regulations. Under the *Road Traffic Act* 1930 section 4, the driver of a motor vehicle was required to do this. If they were unable to do so at once, then a five-day period of grace came into force. If no licence was produced, then the motorist could be fined up to £5. Darlington magistrates appear to have been relatively lenient here, as a common fine for such an offence was 10/- or seven days in jail in 1928.¹²⁹ The possession of a driving licence represents evidence of a need by those in power to possess information about motorists, in order that they could monitor their numbers, and have the ability to exercise some form of control over them, inherent in the provision and removal of such licences. Licensing itself is important, as it is a means of preventing anarchy in motor vehicle ownership that would lead to chaos on the roads, and would mean that the less scrupulous motorist could act irresponsibly with impunity.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ <http://www.gmcro.co.uk/ftpfiles/public/A15.pdf> (Accessed: 18 April 2007) Registration of motor vehicles and licensing of their drivers was introduced throughout the United Kingdom by the *Motor Car Act* of 1903. Detailed arrangements for England and Wales were set out in the *Motor Car (Registration*

The government had by this time, perhaps realised that the phenomenon of motorised transport, was not, as it considered at the beginning of the century, a short-term phase, indulged in by the well-off. Instead, the motorcar, motorcycle and other forms were here to stay and were an increasing problem in environmental and social terms, as regards the condition and upkeep of the roads, and the problems of noise and accidents.

Table 4.3. *Prosecutions for licence offences.*



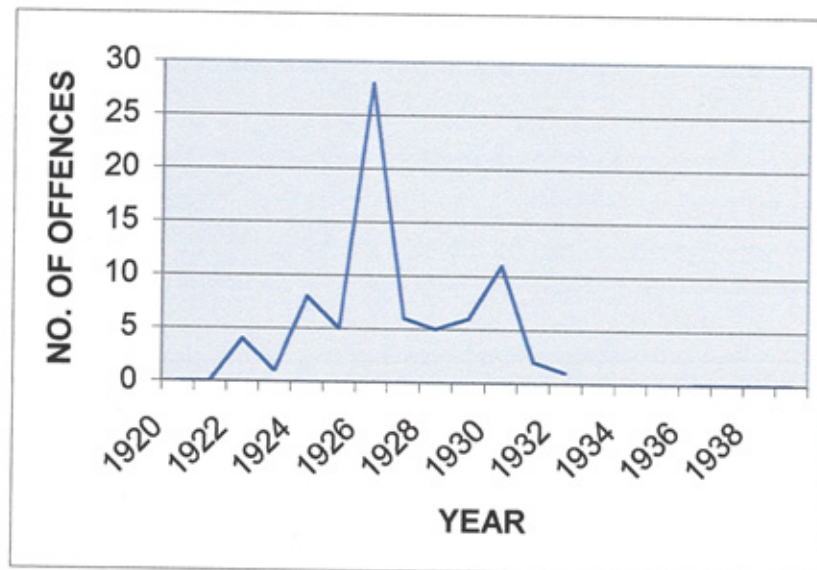
Source: Durham County Records Office. Ref. Ps/Da/B5 to B13.

Amongst the environmental concerns prominent in legislation is excessive noise. The third most frequent group of offences relates to the silencing of motorcycles. This was the subject of much discussion during this time in both the press and Parliament and has been dealt with in some detail on page 141. The subjective notion of what constitutes excessive

and Licensing) Order 1903 and issued by the Local Government Board on 19th November, accompanied by a circular to local authorities explaining the measure. Both licensing and registration were entrusted to county and county borough councils in England and Ireland (county and large burghs in Scotland). The local authorities were to open registers in a form prescribed in a schedule to the order for motor cars and motorcycles, with the option of keeping either a single set of books for both or two parallel series. The issue of driving licences was to be registered separately. A fee of 20 shillings was payable for each motorcar and 5 shillings for each motorcycle registered. Owners were to be supplied with a copy of the entry relating to their vehicle.

noise warranted in the opinion of Darlington magistrates, the same amount of punishment, as the omission of lights, although in some cases, in the event of a second offence, the fine was doubled.¹³¹

Table 4.4. *Prosecutions for silencing offences.*



Source: Durham County Records Office. Ref. Ps/Da/B5 to B13.

The broadly termed offence of dangerous driving can be traced back to the *Highways Act* 1835, section 78, and laid responsibility for any accident caused by a carriage, (or horse) on the driver.¹³² This offence, more recently defined in the *Road Traffic Act* 1930, section 11, was the fourth most frequent offence found in the Darlington records during this time. It was considered the most serious, warranting up to a £50 fine and four months imprisonment. This was probably because it concerned the safety of the driver or rider and of other road users. Darlington magistrates appear to have been relatively lenient here, a fine of 15/- plus 5/- costs or 14 days being a common fine for a first offence.¹³³ Failure to

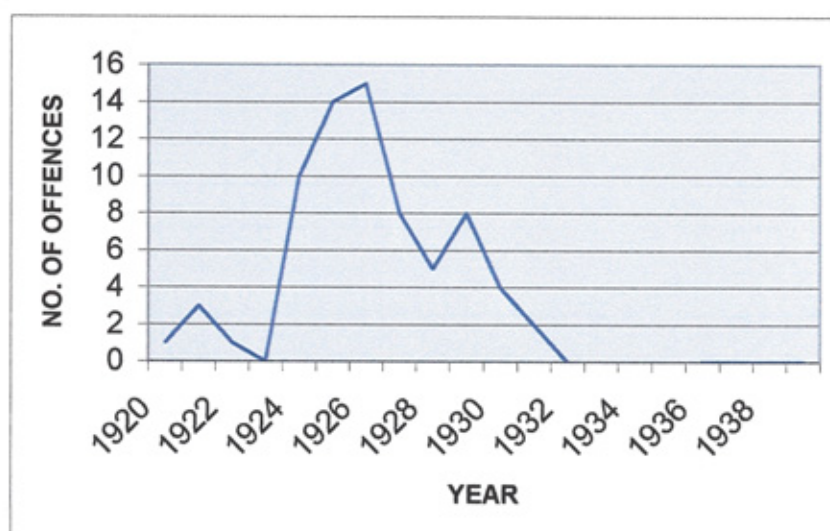
¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Moriarty, C.C. H., *Police Law...* p.203. *Highways Act*. 5 & 6 Will. IV., c. L.

¹³³ Durham County Records Office Ref. Ps/Da/B5 to B13.

tax the motorcycle was prosecuted as often as having inadequate brakes in the data. The former being subject to an excise penalty of £20 or three times the rate of duty payable for the class of vehicle, whichever was the greater.¹³⁴ The magistrates were yet again relatively lenient here, the fine being no greater than £1.10. Inadequate brakes, which were again a subjective point, could result in a £1 fine, which was usual for a first offence at Darlington.

Table 4.5. *Prosecutions for dangerous driving.*



Source: Durham County Records Office. Ref. Ps/Da/B5 to B13.

The above tables show that the frequency of prosecutions for the four most occurring offences appear to increase during the mid to late 1920s period. Possible explanations for this lie either in an increase in police vigilance towards motorcycle offences or in a relative increase in motorcycle use and misuse. Another, more insidious reason lies with the police methods of detecting crime, which tended to concentrate more upon traffic offences, and have been discussed elsewhere. Here, Taylor claims that during this period

¹³⁴ *Roads Act 10 & 11 Geo. 5 Section 13.*

the police ‘found’ more crime, in order that they could continue to be provided with financial resources to be able to continue to operate.¹³⁵ What is unclear is why frequencies decrease around the turn of the decade. It is possible that the introduction of the new *Road Traffic Act* changed the ways in which the magistrate implemented these aspects of the law, or that their priorities changed in the light of changes in traffic conditions, such as increased car usage. Also, the impact of unemployment and economic depression on working class and lower middle class motorcyclists are aspects to consider, as far as new registrations are concerned.¹³⁶

People between the ages of 20 –29 were by far the most likely to end up in court for motorcycle related offences in the Darlington records. There might be two reasons for this. Firstly, it would seem logical for this occurrence if it is assumed that motorcycling is a pastime of particular interest to the relatively young adult, either by choice or because they did not yet possess the income to afford a motor car, and the fortunes of family life did not lead them to require one. Secondly, the exuberance of youth, as well as a certain rebelliousness might lead such a sector of society towards a less than respectful attitude towards traffic law, meaning they would be more likely to fall foul of it. It is more probable that the reason for such a number of this age group being prosecuted, lies somewhere between the two camps. Out of a total of 588 people prosecuted for motorcycle related offences other than those described as ‘non-specific’ during this period in the data gathered, no fewer than 330 lay within 20 and 29 years old. This represents 56 % of the total prosecutions within these criteria. It is not possible to construct a picture of an age range for motorcyclists from the available data as owner’s age was not to be

¹³⁵ Taylor, H., ‘Forging the job. A crisis of modernization....’

¹³⁶ Statistical Dept of SMMT Ltd, *The Motor Industry of Great Britain*. (London: Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, 1964). p.40. This reveals that from 1929 until 1933 numbers of newly registered motorcycles fell from 84,878 to 38,673. The influence of cheap second-hand cars and hire purchase are of course to be taken into consideration here.

included when registering a vehicle, and driving licence records are not available for this area. Prosecutions data therefore provides a rare insight into the general age range of motorcyclists.

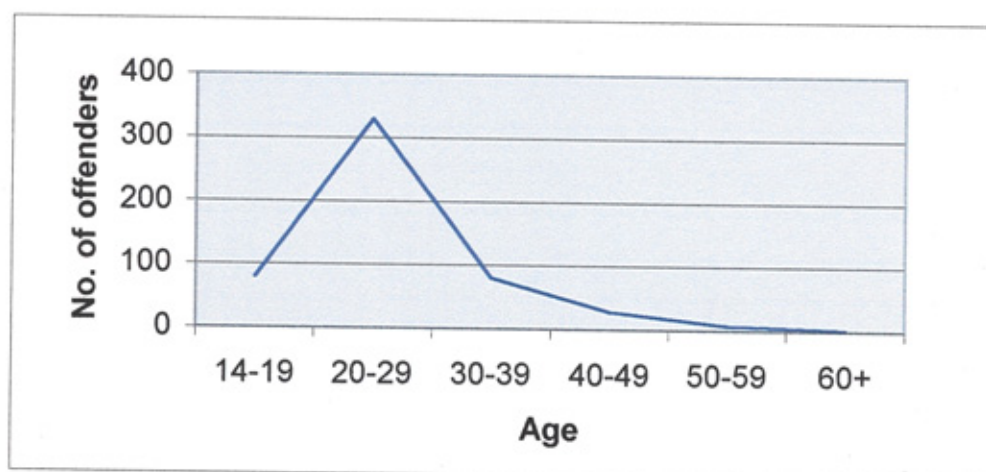
These figures can be related to modern concerns expressed regarding the same age group's incidences of involvement in motor accidents and other related offences. According to one MP, youths in this age range cause a considerable amount of road accidents, due not to drink or drugs, but to the behaviour caused by an excess of the hormone testosterone.¹³⁷

Mr. Michael Wills, (North Swindon) claimed in 1998, that there was a significant decrease in such incidences amongst male drivers over the age of 24. A modern study carried out by the National Driver Improvement Scheme, supports this theory.¹³⁸ The figures acquired from this relatively small sample of Darlington records, show a definite link between age and the likelihood of committing an offence whilst motorcycling. In the next age group of riders, the 30 – 39 year olds, have an incidence of 80 court appearances during the period. These appearances further decrease to 28 in the next age group, the 40 – 49 year olds, as the graph below shows. These figures also support the theory that motorcycling was a young man's pursuit. No female offenders were found in this small sample. The overall national picture for such offences and whether women were significant as offenders is not known.

¹³⁷ *Hansard*, Sixth Series, vol. 305, 28th Jan 1998 col. 287.

¹³⁸ <http://www.ex.ac.uk/~cnwburge/pages/ndis02.html> (Accessed: 18 April 2007). Males have been found to be higher sensation-seekers than females; that is, males display higher levels of the personality trait that dictates the degree to which an individual will behave in a 'risky' manner. This trait is strongly related to levels of testosterone, which are higher in males and in younger individuals.

Table 4.6. *Age range of offenders.*



Source: Durham County Records Office. Ref. Ps/Da/B5 to B13.

There is some evidence to suggest that the imposition of transport law regarding motorcyclists could be tempered with common sense dictated by the seriousness of the offence, and the degree of deception, which the defendant could be seen to be attempting, when it came to the court appearance. An example of this lies in cases, which came to light in the regular columns of local newspapers. The Chester-le-Street police court in 1934 often had a column in the local newspaper. Here, a defendant who deliberately attempted to deceive the police regarding taxing a motorcycle, by displaying an expired tax disk of a similar colour to one currently valid, was charged forty shillings. A youth was charged with the same offence, but claimed that he did not think the machine needed to be taxed as he was only repairing it, and who openly admitted guilt, was only to pay court costs.¹³⁹ The crime of driving under the influence of alcohol appears to have been taken as a less serious crime during the inter-war period, than it has become. Far from being a social pariah, the drunken driver, appears to have been considered a comic figure, as a case from the same court in 1921 shows. A rider, charged with being drunk in charge of a motorcycle, was found guilty, and fined forty shillings, after being a source of

¹³⁹ *Chester-le-Street Chronicle*, Nov 30th 1934.

amusement in court. The rider was told that he could have been fined £10 for driving to the public danger.¹⁴⁰

Any analysis of road traffic legislation, must consider the characteristic arguments in the history of government regulation of vehicles, which occur regularly in the formulation of such legislation and which provide an explanation for the government's failure to take positive action without much debate and time-wasting. Firstly, manufacturers produced vehicles that fell within the existing legislation, of which they were in the main in favour. Secondly, any changes to the law would result in a good deal of inconvenience to the manufacturers, due to the need for alterations to be made to the design of the machine, or production techniques, which would in turn lead to price increases and the possibility of redundancies.¹⁴¹ This is as true for motorcycle producers as for other vehicles, although motorcycles appear to have suffered less from the ill effects of legislation than the motorcar, in areas of taxation. The prime example of this being the horsepower tax, which was calculated by a formula, based upon the cylinder bore diameter of the engine.¹⁴² This tax was raised incrementally the higher the nominal, if not actual horsepower became.¹⁴³ The result of this, as far as exports of motorcars is concerned was detrimental, as manufacturers were forced to produce smaller-engined vehicles, of less power, due to the need for smaller bores, which necessitated longer- stroked, slower revving vehicles. This was discussed in the House of Commons in 1924 as part of a debate about redesigning vehicle tax.¹⁴⁴ It was unsuccessful, as it remained the means of calculating motorcar and other vehicle tax until 1946. Motorcycles were at an advantage here as they were taxed by

¹⁴⁰ Ibid Jul 8th 1921.

¹⁴¹ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car*... p.168.

¹⁴² Bore in millimetres, squared, multiplied by number of cylinders, divided by 1613.

¹⁴³ This was £3 for 6 ½ to 12 hp rising to £42 for over 60hp vehicles. Actual horsepower as measured on equipment designed for the purpose may have been greater or smaller than that calculated for tax purposes.

¹⁴⁴ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, vol. 171, Mar 6th 1924 col.1762.

weight, not cylinder capacity. Despite this, it is probable that the horsepower tax indirectly adversely affected motorcycling in Britain, as it inhibited the development, importation, and production of high-powered cars, by national companies, as well as foreign ones. This in turn promoted the production of cheaper, low powered cars, which the motorcyclist would be more able to afford, if his or her enthusiasm was overshadowed by practicality brought about by the encumbrances of families, or the frailties of the onset of age. As regards taxation of vehicles, the increasing number of them resulted in more funding than was necessary for the upkeep and improvement of the roads. Churchill eventually implemented a raid on this fund in which 20% of it was to be taken from that gleaned from private cars and motorcycles and considered to be a luxury tax.¹⁴⁵ This is put into perspective, if it is realised that one of the main concerns of the government was to urge commercial and private road users back onto the ailing railways, whilst at the same time acknowledging the need for road improvements to provide jobs at a time of high unemployment.¹⁴⁶

The contents of this chapter, and its main themes, must be put into perspective, as regards the activities of the three main elements involved in the regulation of motorised transport at this time; Parliament, the courts, and the police. Parliamentary activities regarding the control of motorcycling seem to have been of lesser concern, even in the area of motor legislation, compared to the hours of debate spent on formulating ways of taxing motor vehicles. For example, the unfairness of the horsepower tax on motor cars, the tax on petrol, the debate on the prevention of road accidents, and the way that Winston Churchill justified his raids on the Road Fund, took up more parliamentary time, than whether it was

¹⁴⁵ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car*...p.201 This produced £2 million in 1926-27.

¹⁴⁶ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car*...p.190 Schemes to provide employment improving the roads, resulted in funds to the amount of £2.8 million in 1920 to £5.2 million in 1923.

lawful to carry a pillion passenger, or whether it was possible to define what was an acceptable level of noise. What is clear from the evidence, is there had as yet not been put forward what Foreman-Peck had called, 'a rational theory of accidents,' in which the hypothetical rational driver '... chooses his speed and accident chances, according to his valuation of the costs he incurs in the event of an accident, his assessment of the likelihood of an accident, and other costs and benefits of speed.'¹⁴⁷ The temporary removal of the speed limit in the 1930 Act was a missed opportunity for this. Taking such a creature into account might have radically altered the way in which motoring laws were formulated at this time. The police as well as the lawmakers had to spend an increasing time controlling motorised traffic during this period, mainly due to the greater number of all forms of vehicle to be found on the roads. They had to share their resources with other occupations, such as the detection of crime and the apprehension of criminals, the protection of property and the maintenance of order in a time when unemployment, and disaffection, was rife in certain sectors of society. The magistrates and police courts had also to cope with an increase in prosecutions for motoring offences, due to the above - mentioned reasons of increased numbers and more comprehensive regulation. Darlington magistrates' records show that motorcyclists were not fined more severely than other motorists for similar offences.¹⁴⁸ Fines tended to be related to the circumstances of the offence rather than any particular bias of the magistrate.¹⁴⁹ Increasing or decreasing fines because of a hatred of or liking for motorcycles would in any case be unethical. Dealing with traffic offences was not and never had been their sole or most important *raison d'être*, this being to dispense summary justice on a wide range of subjects and to decide whether

¹⁴⁷ Foreman-Peck, J., 'Death on the Roads: Changing Responses to Motor Accidents' in Barker, T., (ed.), *The Economic and Social Effects of the Spread of Motor Vehicles*. (London: Macmillan, 1987). p.268.

¹⁴⁸ See appendix 8.

¹⁴⁹ Any deception on the part of the offender, such as failing to stop when directed to by a police officer or in one case found in the *Chester-le-Street Chronicle* (Nov 30th 1934) of placing an expired tax disk of a similar colour to a valid one on a vehicle, was liable to be treated more severely.

more serious cases should be sent to other courts. This chapter has provided a snapshot of the interaction of these three organisations, regarding motoring and more specifically when possible motorcycling, and to have linked this to reactions from the motorcycling industry and the motorcyclist, to provide a picture of what sort of legal processes and controls the motorcycle rider faced at this time. The next chapter analyses some of the social and economic factors concerning those for whom these laws were provided.

Chapter 5. Economic and social factors involved in motorcycle ownership.

This chapter analyses the various factors that dictated the purchase of either a motorcycle or a motorcar, within the various British social classes. Setting aside matters of personal choice as regards the use of two wheels or four, factors such as economics, advertising and the manufacturers' attempts to motivate the purchaser will be explored. Whether a person's choice of transport was influenced by the vagaries of fashion and whether members of lower classes of interwar British society had any desire to follow the habits of their social superiors in this area will also be explored. To do this, an analysis of contemporary journals will be made and used in conjunction with work done by modern historians on the social and economic importance of both the motorcycle and motorcar, together with data obtained by the writer from contemporary records.

Given that motorcycling was often, but not always a pursuit followed by the younger generation, Langhamer's assertion that the majority of young wage earners handed over their earnings to the head of the household to be given pocket money or 'spends' is an important factor to be taken into consideration.¹ Some of the working class interviewees began motorcycling at an entry level, by acquiring a small machine very cheaply or for free, which was often in a state of disrepair. The advantageous human quality of being in possession of a 'willingness to tinker' allowed the owner of the machine the satisfaction of being able to attempt to repair it themselves when necessary. This was an important quality for the dedicated motorcyclist of this period and one that was emphasised in the journals and by interviewees. Some of these people would not have been able to practice

¹ Langhamer, C., *Women's Leisure...* p.99 and *Manchester Evening News* 21st July 1930 p.4.

motorcycling without this trait, because of the sometimes-restrictive cost of new machines and of professional maintenance.

Another academic discusses a means by which this sector of society would have been able under ideal circumstances, to afford motorcycle purchase. In his work concerning youth culture in the post Second World War years, Bill Osgerby provides useful contrasts with the earlier period. There was a tendency for many young people in the interwar decades and earlier to opt for 'blind alley' jobs with relatively high earnings, which enabled them to afford entertainments such as cinema or dancing as well as consumer goods.² Although no data exists regarding the age of motorcyclists, (apart from the figures for motoring offences), it is likely that many of these young people were attracted to motorcycles and could afford them. Bill Lancaster and Tony Mason have further explored this in their study of Coventry.³ In work concerning the advertising of consumer goods during a later period, Osgerby states that throughout the fifties and sixties, advertisers habitually used images of youth to associate their products with dynamic modernity and swinging enjoyment.⁴ When compared with advertisements for motorcycling from the interwar period, there is a striking difference. When young people are portrayed therein, they appear to be less well definable as teenagers and more as young examples of adults, although in some cases the above stylish traits are promoted.

Since at least the Victorian period, as aptly portrayed by the Samuel Smiles, *Self Help*, much of British society was inspired with a need for self-reliance, and a ethic of living

² Osgerby, B., *Youth in Britain Since 1945*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998). p.6.

³ Lancaster, B., & Mason, T., (eds.), *Life and Labour in a Twentieth Century City: The Experience of Coventry*. (Coventry: Cryfield Press, 1986). p.63.

⁴ Osgerby, B., *Youth in Britain...* p.33.

within their means.⁵ Economic circumstances dictated for some, that if the desire for the acquisition of consumer items were to be satisfied, this would have to be tempered by sacrifices in other areas. Much of the motorcycling related self-reliance was a result of necessity, given the likelihood of machine breakdowns. Even a basic knowledge of the workings of the machine might result in the satisfaction of a repair and the continuance of the journey, according to the anecdotal evidence of some respondents and the documentary evidence of some of the 'hints and tips' journal articles. It is apparent that a greater satisfaction was gained by the possession of a working knowledge of the component parts of the vehicle.

The historiography concerning interwar economic and social life in Britain represents the outcome of a wealth of research. Refining this subject to concentrate upon personal motorised transport narrows the field of academic work considerably. The ownership of a motor vehicle of any type was not a priority during this period. Instead such ownership was largely a question of status closely linked with personal economic wealth. Foremost amongst the literature concerning this theme, the relevant chapter of Sean O'Connell's work on the motorcar stresses the importance felt by some sectors of British society of owning such transport and the ends to which they would go to achieve it.⁶ With particular reference to four-wheeled transport, O'Connell found that a variety of methods were utilised to gain ownership, such as the use of hire purchase, or by buying cheap second-hand machines in need of repair.⁷ Steve Koerner has shown the effects of the intentional inroads made by the motorcar industry into the use of motorcycles by the introduction of

⁵ Smiles, S., *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Character, Conduct, and Perseverance*. (1859; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁶ O'Connell, S., *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender, and Motoring, 1896 – 1939*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998) p.11.

⁷ Ibid, p.24 & 32.

the small, mass-produced motorcar.⁸ This made car ownership more possible to those less inclined towards two-wheeled transport for reasons as diverse as family size or social aspirations and had serious effects on the latter's industry. Setting aside initial purchase costs, Koerner also cites two of the main reasons for the popularity of the motorcycle during this time, both of which are economic. Firstly, road tax was cheaper than for a car and secondly, they were economic regarding the space they took up, an important factor in crowded urban districts.⁹ According to one historian of the middle classes, 'One of the most prized aspects of the comfortable life throughout the first half of the twentieth century and one which remained virtually exclusive to the middle and upper classes was the possession of private transport.'¹⁰ Despite this, even the cheapest car was until well into the nineteen twenties far less a viable prospect compared to a motorcycle for many. Jackson cites the Morris Cowley, available at £198, which was taxed at £12 per annum, produced 25 miles per gallon with an equivalent average speed, and was a two-seater.¹¹ It was in almost all ways outdone in performance by a reasonably sized motorcycle or sidecar outfit, apart from matters of weather protection, which placed the motorcycle in a favourable position for those with incomes of approximately £200 - £250 per year. All these writers make the assumption that the motorcycle was for many a mere stepping-stone to car ownership when economics permitted the change. This was probably true for many owners, yet it does not take into account the hard-core of enthusiasm which existed and was most important to the industry, summed up best by Bert Hopwood in the phrase, 'machines are bought, not sold.'¹²

⁸ Koerner, S., 'Four wheels good, two wheels bad: the motor cycle versus the light motor car - 1919 -39' in Thoms, D., Holden, L., & Claydon, T., *The Motor Car & Popular Culture in the 20th Century*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998). p.155.

⁹ Ibid, p.154. See map in appendix 2 for a picture of motorcycle distribution in an urban environment.

¹⁰ Jackson, A. A., *The Middle Classes, 1900 - 1950*. (Nairn: David St. John Thomas, 1991). p.104.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Hopwood, B., *Whatever Happened to the British Motorcycle Industry?: The Classic Inside Story of its Rise and Fall*. (Yeovil: Haynes Publishing, 1981). p.302.

Motorcycle ownership was not restricted to those whose means did not stretch further up the transport aspirational ladder. Some of the most important figures in interwar period society had a passion for motorcycling, and this phenomenon was apparent amongst the British and European aristocracy. It is likely that knowledge of these figures would have been an incentive for some to take up the pursuit. Darlington motorcyclists were comprised of a wide social spread of ownership, not merely the working class or lower middle class. If this is true of the rest of the country, it enforces the claim that this form of transport was not merely a utilitarian poor relation of the motorcar for some.

According to economic historians, there are three definable stages in the diffusion of ownership of consumer durables, such as motorcycles and cars.¹³ Consumer demand theory allows that at the outset, a product will, due to reasons of cost and relative rarity, be sometimes perceived as a luxury, and only be purchased by those in a position of relative wealth. The cost of a product can make it a luxury, although not all products begin as such. In the second stage, the product, through a process of diffusion becomes available to middle-income ranks. The third stage allows for mass-consumption of the product. Through time, the 'pyramid of consumption' is pushed down, the previously exclusively available product eventually being used by the masses.¹⁴ It has been asserted that by the end of the interwar period motorcars had not yet achieved the third stage of the theory, being still a relative luxury.¹⁵ Indeed this was considered to be the case by the car industry, who by the late 1930s assumed the lower income limit for car ownership to be £250 per

¹³ Bowden, S. M., 'Demand and supply constraints in the inter-war UK car industry: Did the manufacturers get it right?' in *Business History*, Vol. 33 No.2 April 1991, p.249.

¹⁴ Church, R., *The Rise and Decline of the British Motor Industry*. (London: Macmillan, 1994). p.34.

¹⁵ Bowden, S. M. and Turner, P., 'Some cross-sectional evidence on the determinants of the diffusion of car ownership in the inter-war UK economy' in *Business History* Vol. 35, No. 1 (1993) p60. This was not the case for professionals such as doctors working in rural areas by the 1930s.

year, the same cut-off figure defining working-class income.¹⁶ A reasonably sized car could cost almost the same as a house to the middle-class buyer during the interwar period, a semi-detached house in the provinces costing between £300 –500.¹⁷ In addition to consumer demand theory, a set of related ideas, used by economists, known as ‘trickle down theory’ applies to the ownership of motorcycles. This theory claims that subordinate social groups through the process of imitation, adopt the customs, (or in this case motor vehicles, when economic circumstances allow) of super-ordinate social groups. In order to maintain status difference, these latter groups adopt other status items, and the process continues through the classes when economic circumstances allow.¹⁸ The theory holds that this will take place between groups that are proximate to one another. For example, the prospective working class motorcyclist will be more inclined to envy the machine of his middle class contemporary, rather than the more exclusive and expensive machine of a member of the upper class, which would be beyond their ability to afford. Motorcycles had by this time passed through all three stages of consumer demand theory. Firstly, they were affordable and used by the majority of social classes, conceivably being perceived as a luxury item in the possession of rich eccentrics only at the beginning of their development. They were familiar, available, affordable and used by the middle class riders, and within the purchasing power of some of the working class. Only the most exotic machines would have been out of the price range of the keen working class rider. Prior to the influx of second-hand motorcars, car ownership was unaffordable to the bulk of the working class.

¹⁶ Bowden, S. M. and Turner, P., ‘Some cross-sectional evidence... p.57.

¹⁷ Bowden, S. M., ‘Demand and supply... p.251.

¹⁸ McCracken, G., *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990). p.93.

The perceived need for comfort and the maintenance of a public show of superiority were two deciding factors important in the decision to purchase a motorcar instead of a motorcycle, if the purchaser had a choice. Also, the need for a vehicle with greater carrying capacity, which arose as a result of continuing family life, was important. The progression to car ownership can be seen as a by-product of an individual's motoring career, if the individual was not a dedicated motorcyclist. The motorcycle can be considered inferior to the car in terms of size, as well as in epitomising conspicuous consumption, although its relative speed and agility, simplicity of construction and easy maintenance were in its favour. Modern motorcycles usually place the rider in a higher seated position than most modern motorcars. Inter-war period machines tended to have a lower seat and frame dimensions were smaller.¹⁹ The sort of vehicles used by many of the upper classes, the more stately form of luxury motorcar, rather than the lower-slung sportscar, when compared with contemporary motorcycles illustrates this point, and may have encouraged feelings of superiority in relation to the physically lower and often dirtier motorcyclist. As motorcars developed into enclosed vehicles, a fundamental change occurred between the majority of car drivers and motorcyclists. This change manifested itself in the need for car drivers to insulate themselves from the elements. The earliest English motorcycling club accepted into its ranks motorcar drivers of a similar philosophy to theirs that of a dismissal of the need for such creature comforts, in favour of increasing the efficiency of the vehicle.²⁰ The majority of early motorcars were open to the elements

¹⁹ This was because they lacked rear suspension, having an unmoveable link joining the rear wheel to the rest of the machine. Instead seats were usually sprung. This allowed the saddle to be mounted lower within the framework, giving a more ideal feeling of sitting within a machine rather than on it, which aided in both machine stability and rider confidence.

²⁰ See The Motor Cycling Club. A similar conflict of ideas can be found in the Mods and Rockers of the 1960s. One of the main complaints between them lay in the Rocker's conviction that the Mods cared more about their clothes than their machines.

to some extent, even if this only meant that the driver sat in the rain, which in itself emphasized the master/servant relationship.²¹

A major perceived advantage of the car over the motorcycle combination was weather protection. The middle class family, if concerned with personal appearances, could on a journey, keep themselves clean, and arrive at their destinations in a position to maintain their decorum. Motorcycles, if used in any degree of seriousness, require specialist attire. This clothing distinguished the wearer as a motorcyclist. It often consisted of hardwearing materials, which in the course of use acquired a patina of wear, usually the result of road filth and bad weather. This could in certain circumstances lead the observer to come to the conclusion that the wearer was some kind of workman, which if propriety and the importance of appearances were considered important, would not have been favoured by some of the middle class. Motorcars provide shelter from the elements lacking on a motorcycle, and make it easier to keep one's attire in pristine condition. Class distinction in dress was still of importance until the end of the period under study. The arrival in the 1940s of mass-produced clothing as well as a more affluent employed working class blurred these carefully preserved distinctions, making it more difficult for the middle classes to show off their differences by means of attire.²² This need was another incentive to change from two wheels to four, and was usually considered to be more important to the female than the male. The extent to which female guidance and encouragement to their male counterparts regarding the need to purchase a motorcar influenced the relative decline in motorcycle use by the middle classes is an aspect worthy of more study.

²¹ No real rift in a master-servant philosophy was apparent in this case. Members of the wealthy classes with adventurous temperaments, and deep pockets, who did not wish to be chauffeured, had the option of driving sportier versions of these early cars.

²² Jackson, A. A., *The Middle Classes, 1900 – 1950*. (Nairn: David St. John Thomas, 1991). p.149.

As the bulk of this chapter is to be devoted to the various factors, which dictated the use of the motorcycle throughout the social classes, it is appropriate that an investigation of the three main class divisions be made. The upper classes and other relatively privileged members of society held motorcyclists within their ranks. They were a relative rarity; although when appropriate, they could provide useful propaganda to the industry and a spur towards purchasing to some members of other classes. This would most usefully apply when the prospective purchaser's personal and financial circumstances allowed the option of two or four wheels. For instance, the Duke of York provided useful advertising copy for the Douglas concern, through personal ownership and sponsorship of the machines in sporting events.²³ Contemporary advertisements for Douglas motorcycles included the Royal coat of arms attributing the status of 'by Royal Appointment' to the British monarch. They were also honoured with the patronage of the Royal Household of Spain.²⁴ King Albert the First of the Belgians is known to have ridden a variety of machines, including Coventry Victors.²⁵ The Royal Grand Sports model owes its name to King Albert's patronage of the marque.²⁶ This monarch was known to be a serious rider who also owned Norton machines. During the 1930s Prince Olaf of Norway was a motorcyclist. The future King Olaf the Fifth was mentioned, again probably for positive propaganda purposes, in a 1932 edition of *The Motor Cycle* where he was cited as riding an Ariel machine.²⁷ Royal patronage was held to be important by those who controlled the industry.²⁸ Two peers of the realm whose motorcycling exploits appear are Lords

²³ The future monarch's safety prevented his taking part in motorcycle racing at Brooklands. Prince Albert, later to become King George VI was particularly fond of Douglas motorcycles, riding them whilst at Cambridge University during the 1920s.

²⁴ Prior, R., *Motorcycling: The Golden Years*. (London: Tiger Books, 1994). p.120.

²⁵ Albert Leopold Clement Marie Meinrad (1875 – 1934).

²⁶ *The Motor Cycle* Dec 4th 1929 p.181 This was a 498cc overhead valve model which sold for £85 in 1930

²⁷ *The Motor Cycle* Oct 6th 1932 p.541.

²⁸ Warwick University Modern Records Office, MSS 204/1/1/4. p.525. In a meeting of the British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturers & Traders Union, the General Manager reported receipt of a letter dated June 28th 1920 from Sir Julian Orde, Secretary of the RAC stating that a letter had been received from one of His Majesty's Secretary's to the following effect: 'I am commanded to inform you that His Majesty will,

Sandhurst and St. Oswald.²⁹ The archives of Durham County Records Office for the period revealed that very few members of society who can be considered establishment or elitist figures, registered machines in this area at this time. Only two, John Frederick Lambton, the Fifth Earl of Durham, and Sir George Morley, the Chief Constable of County Durham, saw fit to have motorcycles registered in their name. The latter's may have been for police use. The importance of the elitist or establishment motorcyclist is shown when it is considered that much stress was still placed by early Twentieth century society upon the physical appearance of wealth. Such riders, tended to regard such conventions as of little importance. Going against the accepted dress code prevented the observer from having any, '... indication of our pecuniary standing,'³⁰ and therefore class deferential ritual could not be observed, although if the person were known certain concessions would be made. Other writers have stressed the need for the establishment to maintain a certain amount of conservatism, for the 'designated guardians of social tradition' to maintain their perceived ideal standards.³¹ These collective standard bearers were required to uphold the traditions of aloofness and dignity, which both linked the past to the future, and kept the elite from the masses. Privilege and power lead to conservative attitudes, but if combined with a need to uphold the tradition of ruling elites, resulted in an

with much pleasure give his patronage to the annual (Olympia) show which the British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturers & Traders Union Ltd. intend to hold this year.'

²⁹ *The Motor Cycle* Apr 5th 1934 p.457. The former, whose motorcycling heritage included serving as a dispatch rider during the First World War, later became the chairman of the Edinburgh Motor Club, further enforcing the popularity of appointing high-ranking member of the elite into positions of authority within the sphere of motorcycling. The latter chaired the British Motor Cycle Association, formed in 1934, which was primarily devoted to preventing legislation, which inhibited the motorcyclist's freedom whilst promoting positive propaganda concerning it.

³⁰ Veblen, T., *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. (1899; London: Unwin, 1949). p.118. Thorstein Veblen the American economist analysed the importance of appearances in maintaining social status. To him, dressing for status was an important means of expressing wealth. To be extravagantly dressed both expressed this wealth and the restrictive design of some clothing prevented the wearer from engaging in manual labour. Wearing motorcycling attire, and appearing to be keen to tinker with them, therefore assaulted such conventions on two fronts that of the practicality of the clothing, and the indulging in manual labour, often for no other purpose than to enjoy the experience.

³¹ Keller, S., *Beyond the Ruling Class: Strategic Elites in Modern Society*. (New York: Random House, 1963). p. 237.

emphasis on the past rather than the future.³² Motorcycles were instruments of a technological present, and gave their riders a common source of social interaction, whereby such traditions of deference could be overlooked, if not permanently removed. The decision to purchase a motorcycle when having the option to do otherwise represented a reaction to the accepted norms to 'better oneself.' It was also a rakish and stylish form of transport that would have appealed to those inclined towards eccentricity. This decision might have been swayed in favour of such a purchase if it was assumed that upper-class or elitist owners influenced ownership lower down the social scale, by becoming what Moorehouse calls in relation to American hot-rodding, 'stars of enthusiasm.'³³

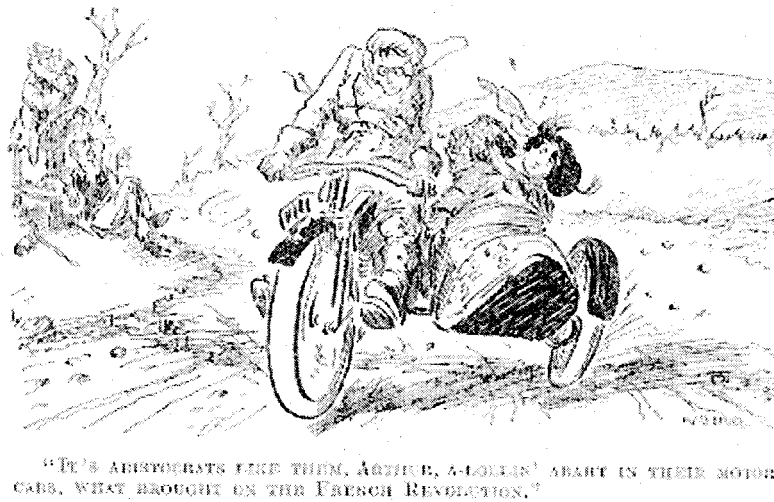
One of the pursuit's most endearing qualities was that riding a motorcycle was a social leveller, which allowed the mixing of classes with a common interest. Donning motorcycling attire could render the rider indistinguishable as regards social class, especially after a long run in bad conditions, which would leave both rider and machine in an untidy state. A hint at the veracity of this statement is found in a *Punch* cartoon of the period. Here, a country local's remarks to his acquaintance reveal an opinion that placed any owner of a motorized vehicle in a position of privilege. A rural population still not used to motors regards the sidecarrists as aristocrats.³⁴

³² Ibid.

³³ Moorehouse, H. F., *Driving Ambitions: A Social Analysis of the American Hot Rod Enthusiasm*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991). p.165. 'The stars of any enthusiasm are important in the production of meanings as they serve both as the embodiment of ideological principles and allow lower-level practitioners to relate their immediate experience to mediated experience through similarities of circumstance and event.'

³⁴ *Punch or the London Charivari*, Feb 8th 1922. p.101. During this period accents of speech and mannerisms would usually reveal the social class of the speaker.

Fig. 5.1. *One view of the motorcyclist.*



Source: *Punch, or the London Charivari*, Feb 8th 1922, p.101.

Motorcycling was a form of motoring well within the financial reach of the elite and establishment. Wealth, whilst being an important factor in the choice of any purchase, was not the only one of relevance. If it were, then the wealthy would only purchase the fastest, most exclusive machines in compliance with Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption.³⁵ The vagaries of human taste in the ownership of articles were a natural phenomenon. These vagaries were dictated by the social, cultural and economic circumstances within which the subject resides. Contravening social mores resulted at least in the subject becoming regarded as being in the possession of an eccentric personality, or at worst in the exclusion of the subject from his or her social set. Motorcycling, when the rider's financial circumstances meant they could afford a car could be construed as eccentric, especially in winter.³⁶

³⁵This is not always the case. When a particular machine has been specified, as in the case of Douglas, these, whilst being by royal appointment, were not the most exclusive or the fastest machine available, despite being of good quality and reputation. Although the location and study of such motorcyclists, has proved relatively difficult, where they have been found, the machines they owned appear to have been dictated by whim and preference, rather than by logic and a fashionable desire to indulge in conspicuous consumption.

³⁶The terms, elite, establishment and aristocracy are used here in an almost interchangeable way. This is no accident. The upper echelons of British society can almost always be referred to in these ways in an

Most motorcycles were usually cheaper than most cars, which placed them in a position of being a more viable proposition for the middle classes to own. In addition to this, fixing a sidecar to the machine converted it into a practical form of family transport, for those whose funds did not stretch to motorcar ownership. The introduction of the cheap car, such as the Austin Seven in 1922, or the Morris Minor in 1928, was one of the factors, which resulted in a decline in motorcycle ownership.³⁷ If it is assumed that the possession of the cheaper form of transport, the motorcycle, was predominantly by members of the middle classes, who aspired towards upward mobility, then it is possible that the numbers representing the decline in motorcycle registrations can be taken from this class. This can be assumed if the decline in two-wheeled figures compared with the rise in four, occurred because motorcar use was seen as a step-up from motorcycle use, and therefore a representation of upward mobility.³⁸ Motor vehicle registrations and the documents associated with them were formulated as a means of monitoring, and regulating said modes of transport, not as an aid to future social historians.³⁹ This is logical as it would have been of no use to the recorders to include them at the time. Women riders of all classes, who registered their own machine for some unknown reason, perhaps one of etiquette, included their full names in the register. Absolute figures for the number of two and four wheeled vehicles also do not take into account the possibility of a middle class

arbitrary fashion. The important exceptions to this lie in areas of meritocracy. The aristocracy bases its membership upon breeding and the inheritance of title and land. It derives its members accordingly, and there is no meritocracy involved, apart from the dubious awarding of life peerages to politicians. The elite and establishment can be entered through merit. Excellence in careers or sport are two ways in which this is possible.

³⁷ See Barker, T. C., 'Slow Progress, Forty Years of Motoring Research,' *Journal of Transport History* 14 (1993). This can be seen from the figures for registrations for the period.

³⁸ The fault with this assumption is that class in itself is not the only criteria for moving from two or three wheels to four, others being for example a change in family circumstances, or the acquisition of wealth by bequest, luck, or hard work.

³⁹ As absolute figures regarding the class of owner, which could have been formulated if the owner's job description was included are not available from vehicle registrations, the decline in relative numbers of motorcycles compared to cars on the registers is at best a hazardous method of ascertaining the numbers of the middle classes, or any other part of the social spectrum apart from gender, who rode motorcycles.

family being in possession of more than one vehicle, for example a car for all the family, and a motorcycle for recreational purposes.

Documents regarding the registration of motorcycles in the Darlington area during 1920, when used in conjunction with local directories found at the Local Studies Centre in that town can provide some evidence regarding the social class of the owner. Although on a relatively small scale, this data provided a snapshot of motorcycle owners from which a generalised impression of the national picture can be drawn. The register of motorcycles for Darlington for 1920 found at Durham County Records Office provided the names and addresses of 136 people first registering machines in this year.⁴⁰ Of these 42 machines were of 4 horsepower (approximately 500cc) or greater, which would allow them to be classed as either high powered sports machines or sidecar haulers, used either as family transport or as business vehicles. A database was constructed from this information and is included in appendix 2. Using the three available local directories for the town some details of 101 of these people were obtained, whilst 35 could not be found.⁴¹ These missing names may be regarded as revealing either the popularity of being included in such directories or the fluidity of occupation in the town, given that the directories were for the year after the registration book. Of the 101 motorcyclists found in the directories 75 either owned or rented their residences. Twelve of the names on the register of motorcycles when matched with the addresses found in the directories were found to be probably relatives of the named occupier. Residing at the family home may have given these people more disposable income with which to purchase motorcycles. It is also possible that some of this section were young, given that it was legal to use motorcycles

⁴⁰ Durham County Records Office reference: Da/2/22 & 2/23.

⁴¹ *Darlington Year Book & Business Directory, 1921*. (Darlington: North of England Newspaper Co., 1921), *Kelly's Directory of Durham, 1921* (London: Kelly's Directories Ltd., 1921) and *Ward's Directory of Darlington, Hartlepool, West Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton, & Thornaby, 1921-22*. (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Ward & Sons, 1921).

on public roads from the age of 14 at this time. Fourteen of the riders were either lodgers at the address given or had recently moved as the occupiers name was different. The occupations of eighty-two subjects were included in the directories and it is these that are most valuable in this exercise. The most common occupation of the sample was clerk, there being 8 instances of this. The clerks mentioned here registered a variety of machines from 2 ¼ hp (approximately 250cc) to 4 hp (approximately 500cc) which may reflect the wide-ranging diversity of the occupation as regards income. Next in frequency in the directories were those who termed themselves, 'Gentleman' there being 7 instances of ownership of predominately 4 hp or larger machines. The term can be associated with upper class aspirations or having sufficient wealth to be of independent means. Those involved in the motor vehicle or cycle trades are included in the sample. Four garages; three cycle makers; one bicycle warehouse; one motor engineer and a tractor engineer registered vehicles in Darlington in this year, most probably as utilitarian vehicles. A familiarity with machinery via the engineering trade is also apparent in the sample. Twelve machines were registered in this section, from a range of occupations, most likely for individual rather than business use. Three draughtsmen, three fitters and one example of engineer; foreman; furnaceman; irondresser; shunter and whitesmith (tinsmith), registered machines.

A cross-section of what can be termed upper-middleclass occupations owning a range of machine sizes are found in the sample. Two instances of managing director, mineral agent and schoolteacher exist. The remaining are singular examples of accountant; architect; construction engineer; academic; military officer; optician; physician; insurance superintendent and solicitor. It will also be noted that His Majesty's Inspector of Schools conducted his business upon a 4 hp Triumph.

It is apparent that the motorcycle was used as a utilitarian device by some of Darlington's small-businessmen, which made up the largest section in the sample. Three butchers and four individuals involved in the publican trade registered machines in this year, as did two tailors and two cabinetmakers. The remainder were single examples of agricultural merchant; boot-dealer; clothier; confectioner; fried fish dealer; grocer; horticulturalist; ironmonger; joiner; newsagent; plumber; a stationer and a member of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. They used a variety of machines not all of which were suitable to power sidecars. This illustrates the degree to which the motorcycle was adopted for use in such circumstances prior to or alongside the light van or horse for making deliveries and other transporting purposes. There were also a small number of people employed as assistants in such premises who probably owned or were paying the instalments on the machines they registered. These include a dental assistant; a journalist; a junior tailor; a mariner and a shop assistant. Unusually, the junior tailor owned a 6hp Hazelwood machine, which was an expensive model.

The above data has been plotted upon a contemporary Ordnance Survey map of Darlington to give an idea of the distribution of machines registered in this year across the town.⁴² This shows a generally random distribution with some concentration of machines in the town centre around Bondgate in an area where population as well as businesses were greater in number. Darlington was chosen purely because of the availability of surviving records.

⁴² The data can be viewed along with the map, Durham sheet LV NW & SW 6 inch OS 1923 edition, in appendix 2.

It is proposed to explore the possibility of the existence of any link between the economic condition of the country and the number of motorcycles on the roads, comparing the registration figures to the generally accepted years of economic crisis, and to find out whether these figures, in contrast with car ownership have any correlation. It will be assumed that the main economic slump, which occurred during the middle of the period under study, can be linked with the number of unemployed in Britain. The lower middle classes were most likely to be the worst hit by fluctuations in employment. Having less financial reserves than those above them, this part of the class tended to be more precariously balanced on the social ladder having often risen through effort from the ranks of the working class to hold an often-insecure place in the middle class.⁴³ It is logical to assume that they were also the sector of the middle classes most likely to own a motorcycle rather than a car, for purely financial reasons, if it was at all within their budget.⁴⁴ It is possible therefore that the lower middle class rather than the upper, were more likely to have the desire to maintain their own machines, given that they possessed a need for self-sufficiency. This is something the middle classes further up the ladder might have been less willing to do. Motorcycling journals often emphasised the degree of satisfaction derived from maintaining the motorcycle, to the extent that it constituted an important part of the pursuit. Both *Motor Cycling* and *The Motor Cycle* held weekly faultfinder columns, providing tips for the home mechanic.⁴⁵

Can any link be forged between the economic state of the country and the ability to own and preference of vehicle? During the inter-war period unemployment in Britain was by no means at a constant level. After a period of economic prosperity following the First World War, figures for the unemployed rose from approximately half a million in 1920 to

⁴³ Crossick, G., (ed.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain, 1870 – 1914*. (London: Croom Helm, 1977). p.35.

⁴⁴ Jackson, A. A., *The Middle Classes*, ... p.105.

⁴⁵ *The Motor Cycle*'s 'Questions and Replies' and *Motor Cycling*'s 'Practical Page'.

almost two million in 1921, falling to about one and a half million for the rest of the 1920s although all figures had seasonal variations.⁴⁶ The economic crisis of 1929 and subsequent years led to a peak average of unemployed insured workers of over 2.7 million in 1933, which then steadily dropped back to its 1920s level just before the Second World War.⁴⁷ During the same period there was a steady rise in the numbers of motorcar registrations, which amounts to an increase of approximately 100,000 per year.⁴⁸ Motorcycle registrations for new machines tend to reflect economic conditions more closely, rising from 114,722 in 1919 to a peak of 731,298 in 1929, thereafter declining to around half a million in 1938.⁴⁹ When unemployment rose due to the slump, motorcycle use had already begun its decline. Does this mean that the sectors of the population which rode motorcycles, usually considered to be from the lower middle classes were more likely to be affected personally by turns in the state of the economy, manifesting in unemployment? And conversely, does the steady rise in the number of motorcars, mean that that section of the population who were able to afford them was more sheltered from the scourge of unemployment? A possible answer to this lies in the generally accepted view that Britain's unemployment problem was concentrated in isolated regions of heavy industry, such as the North East, and south Wales, and was somehow less noticed by the more affluent areas.⁵⁰ The areas more insulated from the decline in the old staple industries, coal, iron and steel, cotton and shipbuilding may have also had a larger car-owning population. If the rise in car ownership can be considered an indicator of the economic state of the country, then it must be assumed that there was an overall rise in affluence, at least amongst that

⁴⁶ Mowatt, C. L., *Britain Between the Wars, 1918 – 1940*. (London: Methuen & Co., 1959).

⁴⁷ Stevenson, J. & Cook, C., *The Slump: Society and Politics During the Depression*. (London: Quartet Books, 1977). p.286.

⁴⁸ Plowden, W., *The Motor Car and Politics, 1896 – 1970*. (London: The Bodley Head, 1971) p.456. This increased from approximately 110,000 in 1919 to just over 2 million in 1939.

⁴⁹ Koerner, S., 'Four wheels good; two wheels bad...' p167.

⁵⁰ Jackson, A. A., *The Middle Classes...* p.324.

sector of the community in a position to purchase a vehicle during the twenty years under study.⁵¹ The availability of cheap second-hand cars is also an important factor.

As has been seen in a previous chapter, the motorcycle industry went through a period where it was thought important to boost sales by producing ‘a machine for Everyman.’ This coincided roughly with the downturn in the economic fortunes of the country of the early thirties, and a host of manufacturers bringing out small capacity models, designed along simple lines for ease of maintenance, all under 152cc, and therefore placing them liable for half the usual thirty shillings road tax. Such machines were now liable to pay only fifteen shillings as announced in the 1931 Budget.⁵² Did such small machines represent an inroad to transport respectability, providing the user with cheap motorised transport and in some way allowing them to gain a foothold in a transport revolution, at the lower end of the social stratum? Would they have been viewed favourably by a middle class intent upon portraying a certain degree of affluence? It is likely that the former can be answered in the affirmative, whilst the latter question is more difficult, and depended upon the extent to which knowledge of motorcycles and their specific merits and demerits was known to the potential purchaser.

Did keeping the Aspidistra flying include keeping the BSA running? Orwell’s book demonstrated the importance felt by the lower middle class during times of economic hardship, to maintain an appearance of relative economic well-being.⁵³ Despite personal motorised transport being a relatively new idea, and its insurgence into the British countryside, being in some circles frowned upon, due to the slow pace of rural society being seen as infringed upon, the ownership of a motorcycle did not class the user as a

⁵¹ Stevenson, J. & Cook, C., *The Slump*... p.9.

⁵² *The Times*, Apr. 28th 1931.

⁵³ Orwell, G., *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989).

rebellious tearaway during this time, as they have often been portrayed since in films such as *The Wild One* and *Easyrider*.⁵⁴ Any perusal of contemporary journals gives the impression of the motorcyclist as being of an independent, educated, and adventurous nature. Some of the traits held in high esteem by this sector of society, if some of the popular literature is to be taken as a guide.⁵⁵ As well as technical terms best understood by the enthusiast, the journals also contain many terms and phrases in common use by the middle classes and possibly designed to appeal to them. Both *Motor Cycling*, and *The Motor Cycle*, used public school or Latin phrases regularly, which constituted an educated style of vocabulary.

If the need to appear affluent dictated the middle class family's mode of transport, to a greater extent than the ability to afford it, then contemporary journals provide a clue as to why some of the middle classes would have eventually decided against motorcycle ownership in favour of a car. Throughout the period under scrutiny, regular lengthy articles appeared in both the main weekly journals, concerning matters of economy.⁵⁶ These mainly concerned fuel economy, and maintaining one's own machine. The appearance of a motorcar in front of a family home where previously there had been a motorcycle would in some cases give the impression that the need for economy within that particular household had diminished, giving cause for concern if an attitude of 'keeping up with the Jones's' existed amongst the neighbours. In contrast to the motorcycle magazines' emphasis on economy, speed and handling of machines, journals devoted to the motorcar such as *Autocar* and *Motor* emphasised characteristics such as comfort,

⁵⁴ See Mais, S. P. B., 'The plain man looks at England', in Williams-Ellis, C., *Britain and the Beast*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1938). p.212.

⁵⁵ Jackson, A. A., *The Middle Classes...* p.282. The middle classes bought the most books, which in the main tended to endorse middle class values, which in its turn was self-perpetuating.

⁵⁶ *Motor Cycling* Apr 9th 1924 p.658. 'Can I Afford It?'

design, and styling.⁵⁷ The traits which distinguish the aspiring middle class motorcyclist from his equivalent car owner, have been described by a Political and Economic Planning survey as the latter being driven by a need for cheapness and efficiency combined with imposing appearance, hinting at a discriminating style.⁵⁸ Show, rather than go, is a rather terse and generalist, but apt term distinguishing the two forms of transport. The motorcycle was often associated with youth, health, speed, and good handling by the advertising press. Psychologically, as well as in engineering terms, the car is inherently more stable. Having four wheels, it cannot fall over. This would have appealed towards a mentality built up around the need for stability. Whether middle class car drivers inadvertently provide a clue regarding their psychological makeup in their choice of vehicle is debateable.

An exception to the generally accepted trait of the majority of motorcyclists as being a sort of mutually supportive brotherhood was noted in a 1930 article in *Motor Cyclist Review*.⁵⁹ Here the writer blamed the fall in prices for new machines, which had opened the possibility of the ownership of the latest more powerful machines, to riders whose social attitudes did not fit in with what was put forward as the noble ideals of the motorcycling scene, one of the most important being fellowship derived from the pleasures and hardships of ownership. People whose social pretensions, perhaps illustrated by their reluctance and probable inability to stop and offer aid to a fellow rider in need of assistance, now had the opportunity to show off their latest status symbol, without paying heed to motorcycling etiquette. It is possible that this type of rider would have been more likely to aspire towards motorcar ownership once the initial thrill of the motorcycle had

⁵⁷ Greenfield, J., O'Connell, S. and Reid, C.. 'Gender, consumer culture and the middle class male,' in Kidd, A. & Nicholls, D., (eds.), *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle Class Identity in Britain, 1800 – 1940*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999). p.191.

⁵⁸ Ibid, and Political and Economic Planning, *Motor Vehicles*. (London: P. E. P., 1950). p.130.

⁵⁹ *Motor Cyclist Review* Mar 1930 p.412.

passed, given that the motorcar would have been a more visible means to show upward mobility. Their characteristics coincide with the fashion following, 'spurious knut' examined in *The Times*.⁶⁰ The wide diversity of motorcycling 'types' and characters has been the subject of critical comment both in the journals and the press during this period. It is relevant because it reveals a need perceived by these publications to provide a selection of definable identities for the rider, and showed the diversity of personalities involved in the pursuit.⁶¹

Motorcars provide a means of insulation from highway problems such as breakdowns and the weather. If the desire to insulate oneself from the world is a middle class trait, then the motorcar provides a means of doing this whilst travelling, which the semi-detached house in the suburbs did for this sector of society at home. It has been noted that the inter-war semi-detached house provided a means to even the lower middle classes to avoid gregariousness, whilst maintaining some, 'separation, individuality and privacy.'⁶² The small, affordable car provided similar advantages, which the motorcycle, being in essence a machine, which placed the rider in a position open to the elements, did not. This is another point of note when discussing this social class's relationship with it. The importance of the club within the motorcycle movement has been discussed in a previous chapter, as has the usual practice of their leadership being by members from the middle or higher classes. The degree to which the middle classes were keen on personal isolation remains a matter of debate.

⁶⁰ *The Times* Jul 30th 1920.

⁶¹ See for example 'We Motorcyclists' and occasional series of articles published in *The Motor Cycle* between February 1926 and January 1928.

⁶² Jackson, A. A., *The Middle Classes*... p.43.

Another factor in the relative decline in motorcycling in relation to the motorcar, and the shift in the ability for the middle classes to afford four wheels was the realisation, by the motorcar industry during the economic troubles of 1929 –32 of a need to develop a larger range of affordable cars. This equates with a similar desire on the part of the motorcycle industry to develop an, ‘Everyman’ machine as has been previously mentioned. Cheap cars had been produced prior to the First World War. Most notable of these, the 8 horsepower Morris Oxford, was aimed at the lower end of the market, possibly motorcyclists. Plans to produce this and the larger Cowley model using Fordist techniques were altered by the onset of hostilities.⁶³ Austin and Morris and several other manufacturers began production of 10 horsepower cars, the former being introduced in 1932 retailing for £148 and the latter a year later for £165.⁶⁴ Both of these models were well within the financial reach of the majority of the middle classes, but were approximately twice as expensive as relatively high-powered motorcycles or sidecar outfits.⁶⁵ A speech by Herbert Austin, given at a dinner held by the BCMCMTU stated that the middle class motorcyclist was a designated target of the motorcar industry in an effort to boost sales, via the production of the small to medium-size car.⁶⁶ Despite this it is more likely that the motorcar industry’s original target, the aspiring car owner, probably of lower middle class, was also a potential or actual motorcycle owner. Figures taken from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders show the popularity of eight to ten horsepower motorcars during the early thirties. This coincides with the relative decline in registrations for motorcycles at the same time.⁶⁷

⁶³ Church, R., *The Rise and Decline...* p.7.

⁶⁴ Rhys, D. G., ‘Concentration in the inter-war motor industry’ *Journal of Transport History*, vol. 3 no.4 Sept. 1976, pp. 241 – 264.

⁶⁵ Koerner, S., ‘Four wheels good...’ p.169.

⁶⁶ Church, R., *Herbert Austin: The British Motor Car Industry to 1941*. (London: Europa Publications, 1979). p.77.

⁶⁷ Rhys, D. G., ‘Concentration...’ p.249. In the 8 to 16 horse-power sector in 1933 for example, 8 and 10 horse-power cars represented 93,000 of the 167,000 cars sold.

A major difference between the motorcar and motorcycle manufacturer's production philosophy lay in the latter's ability or willingness to make a larger range of machines to suit the various needs and ability to pay of prospective customers. Whilst many car manufacturers concentrated production on a few different model variants over the period, even small motorcycle companies were able to produce a greater range of machines.⁶⁸ In 1934, at a time when the proliferation of makers which was in evidence in the early 1920s had been decimated by the Depression, Excelsior, a Birmingham company made 16 different models ranging from a 98cc two-stroke costing £16, to a 490cc four-stroke for £53.⁶⁹ Two of the largest companies, BSA and Triumph produced 17 and 18 models respectively, within a similar price and cubic capacity range. This phenomenon could have arisen in order that a brand loyalty could result; the purchaser of a basic machine gradually moving up through the various classes, (125; 250; 350; 500; or greater) as experience and ability to pay increased. This difference occurred because of the relative difficulty apparent in producing radically different motorcars, compared with the ease by which differently styled or engined motorcycles could be produced.

The need for personal motorised transport can also be linked to the expansion of the suburbs, where the middle classes as well as people from lower down the social scale, often lived. In the absence of a public tramway, railway or regular bus service, the middle class worker's ride to work might be accommodated by two wheels, when dictates of fashion, and economics were favourable. The question arises regarding the existence of any link between the expansion of the suburbs and the increase in motorcycle use, and if so, can this be distinguished from car use in similar circumstances? According to one

⁶⁸ Burgess Wise, D., *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of the World's Automobiles* (New Jersey: Chartwell Books, 1979). p.244. The exception being Morris, which in 1935 could boast a range of 32 different models.

⁶⁹ Its most exclusive machine was a 250cc overhead valve racer, the Manxman, retailing at £85.

historian, there does not appear to have been any link between the two phenomena.

Hobsbawm states that the main migrations from the town to the suburbs occurred much earlier than the expansion of motorcycle use, taking place firstly in the 1860s and later in the 1890s.⁷⁰ This is much earlier than the rise in popularity of the motorcycle during the 1920s and the later similar rise in car ownership. The latter date coincides roughly with the first experimental developments of motorized two wheelers as has been seen in chapter one. The commuting needs of the middle and working class suburban dwellers were adequately taken care of by trains, tramways and later by bus routes. The latter social class was encouraged to migrate to the suburbs to free congestion in cities, their commuting needs being accommodated via the *Cheap Trains Act* of 1883 although the migration was not total.⁷¹ All these methods of transport require the user to be forcibly gregarious. The need for personal privacy combined with the convenience of being less restricted in terms of when and where a person travelled, are major factors in the adoption of motorized transport when it was sufficiently developed and affordable. It is therefore logical that a person's transport needs were to some extent influenced by where they lived and worked, and that living in suburbia and commuting to the city would have been important considerations in the decision to purchase a motorcycle.

If a degree of objectivity is to be used to ascertain an approximate figure for the members of society entitled to be referred to as middle class, and to therefore assume an approximate total of prospective middle class motorcyclists, it is necessary to use occupation to derive such a status. It is generally considered appropriate to define the middle classes as being composed of people involved in professional, managerial, and administrative fields. For the purposes of this study, in order that some idea of the size of

⁷⁰ Hobsbawm, E. J., *Industry and Empire: From 1750 to the Present Day*. (London: Penguin, 1990). p.157.

⁷¹ Briggs, A., *Victorian Cities*. (London: Penguin, 1990). p.15.

such a population can be estimated, percentage figures have been taken from published data, in which a total has been derived from the first five standardised census occupational categories.⁷² When these figures are totalled, the result for the percentages of the economically active population for the relevant years of 1921 and 1931 are as follows. In the earlier year, approximately 17.3% of males and 14.3% of females fitted into these categories and could have been classed as middle class. In 1931 during the worst period of the economic crisis, there was a slight change in relevant percentages, of 17.6% of males and 13.4% of females. The total economically active population for these two years was 13,635,000 males and 5,698,000 females in 1921 and 14,760,000 males and 6,263,000 females in 1931.⁷³ If we confine the numbers of prospective motorcyclists to these social groups then a calculation provides the figures 2,358,855 middle class males and 813,527 females in 1921 and 2,597,760 males with 839,242 females in 1931, who may have been in the economic position of being able to afford a motorcycle, although a relatively small proportion actually did so.

These figures are similar to those found in other sources. According to one historian a more recent analysis reveals this sector of society to be more complex. The major social surveys of the period claimed that 'the middle class began and the working class ended at £250 per year.' This represented 13 to 15% of the population of England.⁷⁴ It was according to McKibbin too restrictive a definition. What mattered most were occupation, manners and social aspirations.⁷⁵ Using occupational classifications derived from

⁷² Halsey, A. H., *Change in British Society*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). p.34. These are composed of 1. Self-employed and higher grade salaried professionals; 2. Employers and proprietors; 3. Administrators and managers; 4. Lower grade salaried professionals and technicians; 5. Inspectors, supervisors and foremen.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures: England, 1918 – 1951*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). p.44.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

censuses, 'the middle-class proportion of the occupied population was 21.71% in 1921 and 21.93% in 1931.'⁷⁶ The middle classes represented both the conscience and the standard-setters of society. Their increasing use of motor vehicles gave both the owner and the machine a creditability, which their use by the higher echelons of society could not, mainly because of the relative rarity of the aristocracy and other elitist factions, and the concept of the chauffeur. If this were the case, then the use of motorcycles by the middle classes would have given the machines a desirability and social acceptability, at least amongst their social equals. The desire to 'keep up with the Jones's' may have been an important factor in the relative popularity and increase in the number of registrations which occurred in the early nineteen-twenties. An important deciding factor in the purchase of motorcycles and other goods, amongst the middle-classes was the ability to save. It has been suggested that a demarcation point for this was £500 per annum. Below this, they might possess some but not all the trappings of progress.⁷⁷ Conversely, the decline in the number of motorcycles, compared to motorcars which occurred in subsequent years, might also have been due to the middle class desire to own the same form of transport as was used by the majority of their social superiors. Other important factors in the choice of motorised transport lie in the production of cheaper motorcars. Fordist production methods had been resisted by the British motorcar industry, which held this process up, although across the Atlantic, it was a major factor in the decimation of the American motorcycle industry. The motorcycle did not lend itself readily to mass production. Another factor was the increase in the availability of the second hand car.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.46.

⁷⁷ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures...* p.61.

Austin produced its first motorcar designed to appeal to the less well off sector of the market in 1922.⁷⁸ It had a rival in the Bullnose Morris. The seven-horse power 'baby' Austin retailed for £225, which compared to £200 for a BSA combination, complete with all accessories. If it is assumed that status is achieved by adding an extra wheel then, this car represented an achievable leap in perceived status, for that part of the middle class, which had used motorcycles out of economic necessity rather than preference.⁷⁹ This cost had almost halved to £125 by 1928, as had the cost of the BSA to £66. The deciding factor in opting for four wheels other than three was decided in many cases on purely monetary terms. If it is true that the middle classes were driven by a desire to achieve the possession of status symbols in reverence towards their social superiors, then this is a major reason why motorcycle use reduced and car use increased. The middle classes were now in a position to own a car to impress the neighbours. The question remains as to the significance and veracity of the assertion that owning a rather fragile looking low-powered car instead of a powerful motorcycle combination represented such a leap forward in status. In Church's work on Herbert Austin and the motorcar industry, it is noted that a comparison is made by Austin between the purchase of a 'top of the range' BSA motorcycle combination and the machine it is assumed the company produced to lure motorcyclists onto four wheels, the Austin Seven.⁸⁰ The machine appears to be little more than a motorcycle combination with four wheels and had a carrying capacity of three if the 'dicky seat' was used.⁸¹ Its advantages lay in increased weather protection and the stability of the extra wheel. The assertion that the motorcar industry produced a basic machine with the intended market target population of those in the position to afford a top of the range motorcycle is significant, because it assumes that this target population was intended to be

⁷⁸ Koerner, S., 'Four wheels good; two wheels bad... p.151 – 76.

⁷⁹ Ibid p.168.

⁸⁰ Church, R., *Herbert Austin: The British Motor Car Industry to 1941*. (London: Europa Publications, 1979). p.78.

⁸¹ Ibid. p.81.

the better off members of the motorcycling fraternity. It also assumes that these motorcyclists would be willing to purchase cars when affordable, and that they were in effect utilitarian riders and not enthusiasts. These small motorcars could have been considered a transitional stage towards owning larger vehicles, and in relation to consumer demand theory they provided a means by which the diffusion of motorcars could pass into the third stage, mass-consumption. Church has also correctly stated that the majority of motorcycling enthusiasts as opposed to utilitarian riders used machines of around the 500cc capacity.⁸² These machines were usually much cheaper than the Baby Austin and its peers and it is possible that their owners were not considered to be viable targets for conversion to four wheels. For instance, in the annual lists produced by the popular journals of machines available to the public in 1934, the fastest AJS machine, a 500cc overhead camshaft, retailed at £80 17s 6d, whilst a most exclusive machine, and one extremely desirable to modern collectors, the Brough Superior S.S.100 would cost the connoisseur £170 or £10 more with a sprung frame.⁸³ The price lists in *Motor Cycling* in February 1934 contained 295 models from 39 companies.⁸⁴ The average price out of all those listed was approximately £53, putting the theoretical average motorcycle well within the reach of the majority of the working population given that priorities such as housing, food and drink were taken into consideration. The cheapest machine available at the time was a 98cc Excelsior two-stroke, which cost £16 16s. Being named the 'Universal' it was another attempt at providing cheap utilitarian transport for 'Everyman'. A similar machine was produced by Wolf's of Wolverhampton, retailing at £17 10s, whilst Royal Enfield's most basic model of 148cc costing £19 19s. It is unlikely that any of these basic machines were designed to appeal to the same class of person as the small motorcar. It is more likely that the small motorcycle was the 'next great thing' for the young initiate into the pastime,

⁸² Ibid. p.82.

⁸³ *Motor Cycling*, Feb 28th 1934 pp.562-574.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

or those progressing from bicycles. These machines represent another stage in a theoretical ladder of progression along the lines of consumer demand theory. The price range for a mid-range 500cc machine in the 1934 lists was between £46 for a rather dated Matchless side-valve to a Norton International, which at £95 represented an ultimate enthusiast's machine, which was capable of winning Grand Prix races. The most expensive machine was the above-mentioned Brough Superior, its quality and intended purchaser, the totally dedicated-well-healed enthusiast being reflected in its prohibitive price.

A deciding factor for those choosing the option of four wheels was a steady rise in relative affluence during the inter-war period, which in the right circumstances, allowed for more choice of consumer goods. Taking the year 1900 to equal 100, an index of national income shows a rise from 117.6 in 1925-6 to 155.1 in 1936-8, with income per head increasing from 107.5 to 134.9.⁸⁵ Whilst this was happening, the relative cost of owning a motorcar had fallen in 1936 to 49% of its 1924 level.⁸⁶ The number of private cars registered for the road had risen from approximately 100,000 in 1919 to over two million in 1939, whilst the number of motorcycles of all kinds had fallen from its relatively dominant position during the early twenties, to being exceeded by motorcars to the ratio of four to one.⁸⁷

Throughout this period, there were an increasing number of motorcars on Britain's roads, and therefore there were more cars available, in areas of choice, price and specification. An increase in number and variety of choice is another deciding factor in reducing cost. Given an expanding choice of vehicular options, the more affluent sector of the middle

⁸⁵ Stevenson, J. & Cook, C., *The Slump...* p.283.

⁸⁶ O'Connell, S., *The Car...* p.19.

⁸⁷ Barker, T. C., 'Slow progress, ...' p.159. The figures in 1939 were 1.94 million cars and 462,000 motorcycles.

classes, were more likely to opt for a motorcar. The second-hand sector of the market also naturally expanded as the number of cars on the road increased. The option of buying a second-hand car as opposed to a new motorcycle outfit was increasingly swayed in favour of the car by a relative decrease in price of the latter. Towards the end of the period under study it was cheaper to purchase a two or three year old car than a new motorcycle combination.⁸⁸

Another aspect of the forces influencing the decision to opt for two or four wheels is hinted at in the motorcycle industry's records held at Warwick University. A document from 1925 reveals the possibility that members high up in the motorcycle industry's hierarchy realised that the advantageous position of the motorcycle in relation to car ownership numbers was at risk in the future. In this year Mr. Otto Thomas informed the director of the BCMCMTU that no further advertisements for motorcars would be accepted into *The Motor Cycle*.⁸⁹ Whether this is an example of specialization or discrimination in the face of increasing unease is unclear, although it does represent a further step in the alienation process that occurred during this period between the two forms of transport. The magazine and its rival *Motor Cycling* were influential elements in the pastime, their advertising elements being important parts of their composition as will be seen. Whether the omission of motorcar advertisements from them slowed down the process of movement from two to four wheels is debateable. During the peak period of motorcycle registrations, *The Motor Cycle* was purchased by approximately one in four of riders if a link can be made between the two figures. In the normal course of human

⁸⁸ Koerner, S., 'Four wheels good...' p.169. In 1936 a new 500cc combination cost £79, whilst a 3 yr old light car of less than 10hp cost £68.

⁸⁹ MSS 204/1/1/6 p.822.

events, it was probably read by many more.⁹⁰ Documents reveal that the motorcycle industry did not necessarily hold advertising to be of great importance if compared to its rival. Towards the end of the period under scrutiny the motorcycle industry invested between £34,823 and £39,206 per year in promoting its products whilst the motorcar industry invested between £853,799 and £911,726.⁹¹ This represents a great degree of complacency on the part of the former industry, one that lingered to its demise.

‘Motorcycles are sold, in the main, to the young generation who know exactly what they like and they are rarely weaned from fixations by the salesman.’⁹²

Hire purchase gradually became an accepted means to purchase goods. By the 1860, it had begun to filter down to the working classes when Singer used it to market sewing machines.⁹³ By the late nineteenth century, it was established practice for the purchase of the motorcycle’s predecessor, the bicycle to be made by this and other forms of credit.⁹⁴ By the interwar period, hire purchase for a wide variety of consumer goods was common and widespread throughout society and took on a range of forms, dictated by the article and class of purchaser. For instance, ‘tick men’ or ‘scotch drapers’ ran systems of credit amongst the working classes in the North East, in order that items of furniture or other

⁹⁰ MSS 204/1/1/10 p.1717 shows that weekly sales for 1929, 1930 and 1931 for this magazine were, 168337, 164747, and 148811 respectively, with registrations being 731298, 724319 and 626649. Sales of the rival magazine, *Motor Cycling* were, 63267, 58598, and 50073. Registrations taken from Koerner, S., ‘The British motor-cycle industry during the 1930s.’ *Journal of Transport History*, 16 (1995) p.62 p.57.

⁹¹ Koerner, S., ‘The British motor-cycle industry...’ p.70. These figures are from the years 1935 to 1938.

⁹² Hopwood, B., *Whatever Happened...* p.302.

⁹³ Scott, P. ‘The twilight world of interwar British hire purchase’, *Past and Present*, 177, (2002) p.196. As an idea of the increase in popularity of this form of credit, the same author states that the number of British hire purchase agreements rose from 6 million in 1924 to 24 million in 1936. Ibid, p.197. A later work disputes this figure, claiming it to be even higher. Clive Edwards puts the 1921 figure for all consumer durables to be 16 million, with 4 million new ones each year, and by 1935, this had risen to 24 million with 7 million new agreements each year. Edwards, C., ‘Buy now – pay later. Credit: the mainstay of the retail furniture business?’ in Benson, J. and Ugolini, L., (eds.) *Cultures of Selling: Perspectives on Consumption and Society Since 1700*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). P.138. These figures emphasise the almost endemic nature of the practice.

⁹⁴ Lancaster, B., *The Department Store: A Social History*. (London: Leicester University Press, 1995). p.99.

household goods could be purchased.⁹⁵ These and other forms of credit held the borrower in danger of repossession of goods, if payments were not kept up. This sometimes occurred at the slightest excuse, of unscrupulous dealers. They were therefore considered by some to be an unsafe means to purchase goods.⁹⁶ The cost of hire purchase payments could be prohibitive. Monthly repayments of £11.58 for a 7-8hp car outstripped the average monthly disposable income of £7.04.⁹⁷ The middle classes have been sub-divided by income into four categories. Those earning £250 to £300 or £350 to £500 or £500 to £700 and those earning in excess of this fitted into this social class.⁹⁸ The work of Bowden and Turner has asserted that by 1934 the middle classes relationship with the motor car had progressed to the point that it was in the process of being considered a necessity, but that the demand for cars was not yet at saturation point, which according to consumer demand theory would cause them to become more readily available to the working classes.⁹⁹

Another prime example of the historiography concerning methods by which social classes saved towards consumer goods is evident in the work of Paul Johnson, who notes that this depended to a great extent on residual earnings. These were more likely to exist in middle class households; a sector of society from which some if not the majority of the motorcycling population were derived.¹⁰⁰ These, Johnson claims, ‘... built up their stock of funds by placing the income they had not spent at the end of the month in a savings

⁹⁵ Taylor, A., *Working Class Credit and Community Since 1918*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) chapter 4.

⁹⁶ Taylor, A., ‘Funny money’, hidden charges and repossession: Working-class experiences of consumption and credit in the inter-war years’ in Benson, J. and Ugolini, L., (eds.) *Cultures of Selling: Perspectives on Consumption and Society Since 1700*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). p.164.

⁹⁷ Hopwood, B., *Whatever Happened...* p.252.

⁹⁸ Bowden, S. M. and Turner, P., ‘Some Cross-Sectional Evidence...’ p.58.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p.66.

¹⁰⁰ Johnson, P., *Saving and Spending: The Working Class Economy In Britain, 1870 – 1939*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). p.220.

account.¹⁰¹ Working class families often had no residual income, but when they did, preferred insurance policies or club saving rather than other forms of private accumulation.¹⁰² Johnson's in depth analysis more than adequately covers working class attitudes and practices regarding saving. There remains a subject not discussed by Johnson, which is the question of how the working class or middle class motorcycle enthusiast purchased motorcycles. Apart from those lucky enough to acquire a motorcycle very cheaply, and the fact that many new machines were a relatively cheap entry into personal motorised transport, hire purchase was one option. Johnson claims this to have been an increasingly viable method during the period under examination, and one which most of the social classes took up. Although this form of credit was not used entirely for buying personal transport, its increased usage is an indication of a general changing of attitudes towards personal finance. Johnson notes that the fashion for personal credit increased. Total figures of £2m in 1925, £5m in 1930 and £15m in 1939 are quoted.¹⁰³ Hire purchase allowed households 'to match the stream of utility derived from durable goods with the stream of payments, and assisted them in committing a set portion of income to such expenditure by imposing the external discipline of contract.'¹⁰⁴

The phenomenon of hire purchasing motorcycles was discussed in a meeting of the BCMCMTU in 1931. It was realised that prospective purchasers would have to absent themselves from any guilt or shame if it was to become a viable means of purchase. There existed a certain form of pride, which prevented many from using this form of credit. The relatively high cost of motorcars meant that hire purchase was more common or necessary than for motorcycle ownership. The purchaser had to weigh a balance between the value of such pride and the perceived increase in social cachet which ownership might provide.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid, p.222

¹⁰³ Ibid, p.158

¹⁰⁴ Scott, P. 'The twilight world... p. 204.

There appears to have been a shift in perspective, as the 1930s arrived. The Union set out standards for HP terms, for the purchase of cycles and motorcycles. Their suggested policy was that a: An initial deposit of as least 1/12th of the total value be laid down; b: Weekly or monthly payments should be made and completed within one year, and c: 20% be added to the cash price.¹⁰⁵ Also, many motorcycle dealers openly displayed their HP terms. Among these, Motormyles of Great Portland St. London had a shop front dominated by its HP terms.¹⁰⁶ In flagrantly emphasising the availability of hire purchase, the dealer would it was hoped, diminish any reluctance to utilise the facility. These tactics may be considered successful. Insurance company estimates suggested that about 75% of motor vehicle purchases were done using hire purchase during the 1930s.¹⁰⁷

The readily available option of making purchases on credit placed many of the middle classes as well as to some extent the working class in a position whereby they were able to own relatively expensive articles such as motor vehicles. The willingness to enter into a hire purchase agreement or some other form of loan represents an important factor in the decision- making process regarding the option of purchasing a motorcar or motorcycle, when the former was more expensive than the latter. Any perceived notions of social stigma must be taken into account, in an analysis of why the middle classes chose to purchase a motor vehicle using these methods. If the notion of feeling shame in entering into a form of credit was set aside, then the middle class purchaser was placed in the position of being able to afford a car far easier than would otherwise have been the case. This was clearly not the case for items of household furniture.¹⁰⁸ The historian of the social importance of the motorcar during the inter-war period has claimed that there was a

¹⁰⁵ MRC MSS 204/1/1/10 p.1617.

¹⁰⁶ *The Motor Cycle* Jul 28th 1932 ads.p.14. After an initial downpayment, a basic Rudge Whitworth motorcycle was available for two shillings per week with 18 monthly payments.

¹⁰⁷ Scott, P. 'The twilight world...' p.206

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p.207. 'The clandestine nature of HP reinforced its social stigma.'

good degree of reticence regarding the discussion of the subject of credit or ‘deferred terms’ in the motoring press.¹⁰⁹ Presumably, it was to be kept secret from the purchaser’s peer group and neighbours, in order that the appearance of affluence could be maintained. The phenomenon of the provincial purchaser travelling into the nation’s capital to buy a car on credit, so as to keep the process a secret from his local dealer, and supposedly therefore the rest of the village, reveals that a stigma regarding credit did exist.¹¹⁰ It did not prevent its increased use in all sectors of society as the period continued.

It has been asserted that a major element in the growth of popularity of the motorcar in relation to the motorcycle lay in the increasing availability of cheap second-hand cars.¹¹¹ Although second-hand cars had been available throughout the period under scrutiny, their numbers increased from the end of the 1920s, due mainly to the car industry’s increasing adoption of American-style mass production techniques, which brought both new and previously owned car prices down, due to an increase in their number.¹¹² The international dominance of the British motorcycle industry compared with that of the motorcar as well as the profusion of manufacturers, and the popularity of this form of transport, meant that there had never been a shortage of second-hand motorcycles compared with the car prior to the end of the 1920s or afterwards.

It is useful to briefly analyse two significant years. Firstly, 1923 represents a period of motorcycling history when the pursuit was in the middle of a period of high popularity. The number of producers had maintained a steady level after the immediate post-war

¹⁰⁹ *The Motor Cycle* Jul 28th 1932 ads. p.25.

¹¹⁰ O’Connell, S., *The Car*... p.26.

¹¹¹ Koerner, S., ‘The British motor-cycle industry...’ p.62.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

boom.¹¹³ This affected both price and availability beneficially. Also, the number of registered machines was enjoying a continuous increase nationally, there being 430,000 in 1923, rather than having attained the peak of 731,000 in 1929.¹¹⁴ In a similar fashion, the year 1935 saw motorcycle use midway through its decline, there being 521,000 registrations and had reached a period when the number of firms producing them had ceased to decrease drastically.¹¹⁵ Two-wheeled transport had from the start of this period been readily available in a second-hand form. The weekly journals show a profusion of dealers and private individuals offering second-hand motorcycles for sale. Throughout the era *The Motor Cycle* was divided roughly equally between approximately 40 pages of articles and 40 of an advertisement section, a large part of which was concerned with selling new and previously owned machines. In 1923 the same magazine's advertising section held over eleven hundred individual machines for sale. This does not include those in the dealer's advertisements.¹¹⁶ During the 1930s the position was similar in terms of adverts to articles ratio, with approximately 1200 machines for sale privately or by small dealership placements. The above figures are for solo machines. In the case of sidecar combinations, no separate section of the journal was provided. Instead, advertisements for combinations were embedded within the majority of those for solo motorcycles. The situation whereby the prospective purchaser of a second-hand machine had the option of choosing either a private seller or dealer, with the proviso that the latter option would prove more expensive due to the dealer being obliged to mend any defect upon the machine's return, was in evidence during this period, and would have been taken into

¹¹³ See table 1.5 in chapter 1 on page 41.

¹¹⁴ See table in Koerner, S., 'The British motor-cycle industry...' p.57.

¹¹⁵ See table 1.5 in chapter 1 on page 41.

¹¹⁶ *The Motor Cycle*, Apr 12th 1923.

consideration by the prudent purchaser.¹¹⁷ Taking data from the same journal of 1935, a London dealership's advertisement reveals that prices for second-hand sidecar combinations had fallen drastically. A range of 23 machines of up to 6 years old could be purchased from £19 for a 1929 BSA 493cc to £59 for a year old twin cylinder 500cc machine from the same company.¹¹⁸ In the case of private sales, the same deterioration in the resale value of such machines is evident. The cheapest comparable BSA combination available in this edition of the journal could be purchased for nine guineas for a 1930 model, whilst the most expensive was a nearly new machine for 59 guineas.¹¹⁹ The condition of the machines accounted for their price variations. The increase in the number of cheap second-hand cars would account for the decrease in the resale value of such machines, and place them within the affordability of more of the population.¹²⁰ In the case of second-hand solo motorcycles of the middle capacity of around 500cc, which is considered to be the size of machine most often owned by the enthusiast, a two-year-old 3½ horsepower Norton could be purchased in 1923 from a dealer for £55. This was a midway in terms of cost of a previously owned vehicle in the dealer's advertisement for that week.¹²¹ A similar machine from the private sellers' page could be had for £33.¹²² In 1935 a three year old 490cc Norton was advertised at £37 from a dealer,¹²³ whilst a similar machine could be purchased for 29 guineas privately.¹²⁴ That such machines kept their resale value well especially when compared to sidecar prices, illustrates that even at a time of relative decline in the motorcycle's popularity, there remained a hard-core enthusiast

¹¹⁷ Ibid. For example, a 1921, 4½ horsepower BSA combination was offered for sale, second-hand by a London dealer, Lovetts Ltd. for £83 in 1923. A private individual advertised a near-identical machine in the same publication, on the same day for £60.

¹¹⁸ *The Motor Cycle*, Jan 10th 1935.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ See Koerner, S., 'The British motor-cycle industry...' p.63.

¹²¹ *The Motor Cycle*, Apr 12th 1923 ads p.41. Here, Maudes of London held second-hand machines ranging in price from £15 to £70.

¹²² Ibid ads xxiii.

¹²³ *The Motor Cycle*, Jan 10th 1935 ads. xvii

¹²⁴ *The Motor Cycle*, Jan 10th 1935 ads.xi

element within the movement, similar to that discussed in Moorehouse.¹²⁵ It also hints at the difference between solo and combination riders. The use of machines of a larger capacity than what might be considered adequate for purely utilitarian purposes, would be used by such enthusiasts, whilst motorcycle combinations, if used for the purpose of carrying families until a motorcar was affordable, would have been more useful the larger their cubic capacity.

The degree to which certain types of motorcar were identified with social class, has been analysed, and there appears to be a genuine distinction between the classes of person usually associated with the cheap motorcar, the sports car and the gentry orientated car at the high end of the price range, such as the Rolls Royce.¹²⁶ As has been stated, the motorcycling world had little place for social distinctions and snobbery. The attire, the enthusiasm for the mechanics of the subject, and the resignation of the rider towards being exposed to the elements, as well as a tacit feeling of mutual experience, could ideally strip away feelings of social pretension.¹²⁷ Hints at such aspirations do occur in advertising for some manufacturers. George Brough whose Brough Superior machines, were one of the most exclusive makes available during this period, were advertised as ‘The Rolls Royce of Motorcycles.’ The extent to which royal patronage aroused the interest of the middle classes in Douglas motorcycles is a matter of conjecture although it is possible that some potential rider’s interest would have been directed towards this particular make on these grounds. Perhaps in some kind of acknowledgement of certain prospective owners’ need to keep clean; the industry had an interest in providing some form of protection whereby

¹²⁵ Ibid. ads. vi Pride and Clarke, another London dealer offered new 490cc Nortons for £57. Moorehouse, H. F. *Driving Ambitions...* ch.7.

¹²⁶ O’Connell, S., *The Car...* p.23.

¹²⁷ Despite the pervasive social snobbery of the middle-classes, against for instance, profiteers, Jews, and the working-class, which has been explored in McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures...* p.55-59, motorcycling was a pastime which could rise above such prejudice, through a combination of status acquired by riding skill, and the homogenising effects of mud.

the rider's clothing would not come into contact with dirty parts of the machine. Enclosure became fashionable for a time during this period, in machines such as the Ascot Pullin of 1930. Others went farther in claiming that their machines were designed to be two-wheeled cars, the examples here being the Neracar, and the 1926 Saro Runabout, the latter being designed by the pioneer aviator A. V. Roe.¹²⁸ Although cleanliness was a virtue held in all sectors of society, the need to keep clean particularly applied to the middle classes, and it is to this form of enclosed, two wheeled car, that many of them would have been drawn, when the need to own a motorcycle coincided with the ability to afford one.¹²⁹

In pure economic terms to the majority of the working classes, a motorcycle represented a luxury item for most of this period. The working classes were more likely to live close to work and not need such forms of transport. A bicycle was to them and other members of society with a desire to keep fit, a viable option for slightly longer commuting trips, and it has been noted that there was a boom in popularity in this form of transport during the period in question, there being by the mid 1930s up to 14 million in use, a figure which according to contemporary government figures represented a rise of 94.98% between 1931 and 1935.¹³⁰ What must be taken into account is that motorcycle ownership amongst all classes was not purely because of economic necessity, and that this applied to the working class as much as elsewhere. As has been noted, the criteria of consumer demand theory, had by this time been met to allow some members of the working classes to purchase motorcycles, should the desire arise, and cheap second hand machines were readily

¹²⁸ Ayton, C., Holliday, B., Posthumus, C. & Winfield, M., *The History of Motorcycling*. (London: Orbis Publishing, 1979). p.111.

¹²⁹ A kind of halfway house between car and motorcycle ownership which might have been of interest to the middle classes, and which was particularly popular during the twenties and thirties, was the light car or the three-wheeler. These machines were usually cheaper than conventional motorcars. The former tended to be rather flimsy in construction, whilst the latter such as the Morgan, was often portrayed as being of appeal to those with sporting aspirations.

¹³⁰ Koerner, S., 'The British motor-cycle industry...' p.63.

available.¹³¹ Such cheap machines were one way in which the aspiring, youngster could enter the pastime, even if from humble working class origins.

Several respondents were from working class backgrounds and began motorcycling at grass-root levels. Some notable examples are: a Middlesbrough man who purchased his first machine, a BSA 125cc sidevalve at the age of 12 in 1940.¹³² A man from Leyburn in North Yorkshire, who purchased a Triumph 125cc model X, aged 16 for £2 in 1932.¹³³ A miner's son from Woodland, County Durham, was introduced to motorcycling through his older brother's machines, and bought a 3½ hp Ariel for 12/6.¹³⁴ All these people were motorcyclists for many years, gradually purchasing better machines, through repairing and improving them, and selling them on, exemplifying the advantages of having a 'willingness to tinker' a trait which was encouraged in the journals via the continuous practice of publishing articles concerning machine maintenance such as engine strip-downs. Working class car owners who constituted 1 in 8 of the sample provided by Sean O'Connell in his book, differed from their motorcycling peers.¹³⁵ Here the need for working class motorists to be in well-paid jobs, in the motor trade, or become joint owners of second-hand cars with another party, is emphasised, as is the need for hire purchase. To the working classes, motorcycle ownership represented an enlightened inroad to transport technology, and the cheapest, most convenient means by which to broaden their motoring horizons. The physical size of the machine was also an advantage in terms of storage, especially when housing conditions prevented the erection of a suitable shed. It is also

¹³¹ Small, used machines were advertised regularly in the weekly journals for a few pounds. For example *The Motor Cycle* Mar 30th 1933 ads. iv held an advertisement for a five-year-old BSA 3.49hp machine from an address in Park Avenue London for £5.

¹³² Respondent 8: born Middlesbrough 1928. Bakery driver. As with most of the interviewees his first experience of motorcycling was through being a passenger on his parent's (a railway fireman) machine.

¹³³ Respondent 3: born Leeds 1916 Printing machine salesman.

¹³⁴ Respondent 4: born Woodland, County Durham, 1910. Van driver.

¹³⁵ O'Connell, S., *The Car...* p.36.

likely that motorcycle ownership appealed to the skilled manual working class person, who was familiar with machinery through their everyday work, and also more likely to be more familiar with technical jargon and tool-handling.¹³⁶

Class diversification of motorcycle ownership has also warranted a brief mention in a survey undertaken by the International Broadcasting Corporation for Mass Observation in 1939.¹³⁷ Here, the four social classes arbitrarily standardised by contemporary market researchers, are investigated in the London area in a range of fields such as servant employment, type of housing, occupation of main breadwinner, and mode of transport owned. Although classes A and B might possibly have owned motorcycles, the survey assumed aspiring or actual car ownership.¹³⁸ It is only in class C that a borderline over which motorcycles might be owned is mentioned. This equates with membership of the skilled working classes, black-coated workers and low-grade civil servants, who might very rarely own a second-hand car.¹³⁹ Work done in the 1960s by a statistician concerning car and motorcycle ownership for the Road Research Laboratory, gives a useful comparative picture for the interwar period. The influences of five variables – average income; percentage of workers in a high social class; percentage of population living in urban areas; population density and latitude, were studied.¹⁴⁰ Tanner noted that geographical latitude, income and population density had noticeable effects on motorcycle ownership. Ownership was substantially lower in the north, and not by this time affected

¹³⁶ Respondent 8 drove a bakery van. His father was a fireman on the railways. Respondent 4 a van driver's other passion was amateur radio, whilst Respondent 3 worked for a manufacturer of printing machines and was a Jazz musician.

¹³⁷ Harrison, T. & Madge, C., *Britain by Mass Observation*. (1939; London: Cresset, 1986). p.222.

¹³⁸ Class A might be a owner of a small factory or in other executive work equating to upper middle class. Class B might own a small workshop, or be one of the higher civil servants, equating to lower middle class.

¹³⁹ Ibid. p.223.

¹⁴⁰ Tanner, J. C., 'Car and motorcycle ownership in the counties of Great Britain in 1960,' in *The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, series A, vol.126 no. 2, 1963, p.276- 284.

by social class.¹⁴¹ Ownership of cars rose with rising income. Social class factors decrease in importance with increasing urbanization and population density.¹⁴² Comparing this data with the interwar period shows some differences and similarities. The first of these variables, latitude agrees with the findings noted in the chapter on clubs. The Auto Cycle Union handbook shows that the North and North Eastern areas had 14 registered clubs, whereas the South East had 61 in a more highly populated area. Income and social class would have had a more direct effect upon motorcycle ownership, it being more likely that the middle classes would be riding at this time, until car ownership prevailed, due to the increase in second-hand vehicles of this type.

This chapter has analysed the various factors determining the individual's choice of motor vehicle. These have been shown to be composed of a range of the subjective and objective influences and causes. Subjectively, the motorcycle was desirable in terms of personal preference in loyalty to two or four-wheels, in dictates of fashion, such as a need to maintain a standing within a certain social class, or as in the beginning of the nineteen-twenties, when motorcycling appeared to be the 'in thing' and the use of a motorcycle as a pleasurable pursuit, the motorcycle filled a desire for greater access to the countryside. Objectively, the motorcycle filled a gap in the need for personal transportation, to and from work and for other domestic journeys, in sectors of society that could not afford a motorcar, due to the latter's not yet being available in sufficient numbers, to bring the second-hand price within range. Economic factors, such as the respective industries attempts to bring costs down and put more of the population in the market for such consumer items have been analysed. One of the major causes for the relative decline in the number of motorcycles in use during the period lies in a lack of appreciation of their

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p.276. by this time, County Durham had 0.027 motorcycles and 0.067 cars per head of population.

¹⁴² Ibid. p.281.

usefulness by the Government especially as a utility machine. This is illustrated by the Budget of 1931, in which it was expected that tax for under 150cc machines would be removed in line with continental practice. Instead of this a three-tier tax system was installed, remaining on small machines and resulting in fewer registrations. On the Continent, where small machines had no tax, registration figures rose, resulting in a thriving localised industry.¹⁴³ The conclusion is that the motorcycling population of the interwar period can be generally divided into those who used them for utilitarian purposes, until economics allowed them to move to four wheels, and those who represented the genuine enthusiast, who might or might not have been financially capable of motorcar ownership. An editorial comment made in *Motor Cycling* at a time when concerns were being expressed about the increasing cost of some new machines and whether it would drive some riders to four wheels is appropriate:

‘The time to think about swopping over to four wheels is when one’s beard begins to get into the habit of getting all tangled up in the rear chain.’¹⁴⁴

This chapter analysed the shift in relationship between motorcycling and society during the interwar period. By 1939 participation in motorcycling was increasingly perceived as being dominated by working class riders. Enthusiasts dominated the pastime and while this community did not display the colour and notoriety of motorcycling after 1945, it did nevertheless attract attention from part of the media from the 1920s and 1930s. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁴³ Ayton, C., Holliday, B., Posthumus, C. & Whinfield, M., *The History...* p.133.

¹⁴⁴ *Motor Cycling*, Oct 14th 1936.

Chapter 6. Motorcycling in the media and arts.

In this chapter we will examine the extent to which European cultural representations of motorcycling were replicated in British art and culture. As a means of widening the study of the motorcycle during this period, it is proposed that some of the relevant cultural aspects of the subject will be explored and a number of previously uncovered questions be addressed. The motorcycle's place in literature, art, music and film, during this period has not been studied in any detail. This will be rectified using archival sources, where they exist, to discover the extent to which it influenced or was influenced by such cultural and aesthetic areas. Some examples of this being the role of the motorcycle in 'cop chases' in films, or in the work of Dorothy L. Sayers, who rode and to some extent wrote about motorcycles and whose writing shows an enthusiast's knowledge both of technical terms and the phrases used within the sub-culture, which designated the user as a member. The interest of the Futurists in the motion of the machine and the place the motorcycle held within other relevant forms of art will be examined, as well as references made in popular music such as jazz.

The subject of motorcycling in the media and arts relates in many aspects to cultural and media studies. Turning first to literature, and to what was for many a foundation stone for the motorcycling enthusiasm, Hoggart has noted the importance of the hobbies press as a means by which enthusiasts might learn the intricacies of their subject, thereby offsetting feelings of dissatisfaction with their regular jobs by integrity and devotion to a craft.¹ These reactions became more pronounced when workforces became less specialised and some craft based occupations were replaced by repetitive actions in workplaces using

¹Hoggart, R., *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working Class Life, with Special Reference to Publications & Entertainments*. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957). p.326, cited in p Moorhouse, H. F., *Driving Ambitions: An Analysis of American Hotrod Enthusiasm*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991).144.

mass-production techniques, and the stabilising integrating ego-satisfying role of work was diffused.² Moorehouse rightly claims that the American hot rod enthusiasm was not an unusual example of this phenomenon although he asserts that this remains a moot point for academic discussion. Kornhauser found that only 10 – 15% of his sample of 407 Detroit automobile factory workers in 1954 seriously engaged in hobbies or pastimes whilst Reisman, in his introduction to Chinoy's study of a similar group in 1955 asserts that the possibility was viable.³ In a later work, Gartman acknowledges these feelings of alienation, claiming that the possession of modern technological articles, (in this case motorcars or more mundane household articles) could result in the, '...desublimated gratification of displaced desires.'⁴ Perusal of contemporary journals devoted to motorcycling provided an overwhelming impression in favour of Moorehouse's assertions regarding the importance of what he continually refers to as the 'enthusiasm' to the readership. This standpoint might have been a logical and inevitable one for the magazines to take, one that was intended to produce the result of promoting the pastime, and one that in effect, preached to the converted.

In his chapter concerning literature, Ross McKibbin notes what he considered to be a powerful theme in this form of 1930s culture; the way technology could be used by the various genres as well as in reality, to 're-integrate the British empire by overcoming the vast distances which seems to be driving it apart.'⁵ For his best example, he cites W. E. Johns' *Biggles* books and aviation as the most apt technological form. Several pertinent

² Moorehouse, H. F., *Driving Ambitions...* p.145.

³ Kornhauser, A., *Mental Health of the Industrial Worker: A Detroit Study*. (London: Wiley, 1965). p.7 and Chinoy, E., *Automobile Workers and the American Dream*. (Boston: Doubleday & Co., 1955). pp. xix - xx cited in Moorehouse, H. F., *Driving Ambitions...* p.146 – 147.

⁴ Gartman, D., *Auto Opium: A Social History of American Automobile Design*. (London: Routledge, 1994). p.165.

⁵ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures: England 1918 – 1951*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). p.502.

examples of this phenomenon are in existence in the form of epic journeys made by motorcycle, which have either been published as works in their own right or serialised in the enthusiast journals. That motorcycles were used for these trips emphasised their practicality, versatility, and reliability as well as the adventure. Two of the most notable of such trips as regards an imperial theme show that a market existed at this time for vicarious adventures of this type. Firstly, a ride through the African continent made on a Panther motorcycle and sidecar by two women, Theresa Wallach and Florence Blenkiron, published as *The Rugged Road*, had the successfully accomplished aim of traversing Africa from Cairo to the Cape, whilst mainly travelling through British controlled territories.⁶ Robert Edison Fulton's *One Man Caravan*, in this case an extensively modified Douglas motorcycle, traversed the globe, with British imperial outposts sometimes providing sanctuary, from the elements and local disturbances.⁷ Also, as a means of entertaining the armchair motorcyclist, the journals serialised similar epic journeys with a continual theme of the reliability of the British product. These contemporary pieces of literature were the origins of what has through its present day range and diversity become a specific genre in its own right. This has been analysed by Steven Alford and Suzanne Ferriss of the online International Journal of Motorcycling Studies, who due to the above reasons of abundance have categorised the genre into several sections for further future academic study.⁸ Academic research into the motorcycling activities of some literary figures or the inclusion of motorcycling within the body of their work is rare. The extensive research of Chris Willis on Dorothy L. Sayers is

⁶ Wallach, T., *The Rugged Road*. (1936; London: Panther Publishing, 2001).

⁷ Fulton, R. E., *One Man Caravan*. (1937; New Hampshire: Whitehorse Press, 1996).

⁸ http://ijms.nova.edu/July2006/IJMS_Resources/AlfordFerriss.html (Accessed 18 April 2007). Alford and Ferriss categorise motorcycling literature into the following sections: Memoirs of riders; Sociological studies of who rides motorcycles; Motorcycle travel books; Marque histories; Motorcycle fiction and film; The motorcycle as an aesthetic object.

an example of the genre.⁹ Also, much work has been done on the riding exploits of the famous motorcyclist, T. E. Lawrence.¹⁰

The motorcycle as an art form has been comprehensively established as a bona fide entity through the work of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Their museum exhibition on this subject covers a broad range of technical development of this mode of transport, from its earliest form to the present, whilst emphasising the aesthetically satisfying aspects of each machine. The work published alongside this, *The Art of the Motorcycle* is equally broad in scope, offering the reader a wide-ranging analysis of the development of the machines as well as essays on aspects of the subject.¹¹ Plainly, motorcycles were not conceived as artistic entities despite being appreciated as such by certain sectors of society¹². Their production and use was and remains fundamentally utilitarian. That they can be appreciated for their artistic qualities is a rationale, which may appear invalid to all but the enthusiast. The Guggenheim exhibition made the radical step of allowing the motorcycle to become as appreciated as an artistic form by the artistic intelligentsia, as have been certain of their qualities by many motorcyclists for generations. In Walter Benjamin's analysis of what defines art he states that, 'Two polar types stand out: with one, the accent is on the cult value; with the other, on the exhibition value of the work.'¹³ The cult value of many of the motorcycles in the exhibition is unquestionable.¹⁴ The exhibition value lies in contemporary nostalgia for the engineering achievements of a previous age. The three main artistic genres of the interwar period, Futurism, Art Deco,

⁹ <http://www.chriswillis.freemove.co.uk/Sayersbikes.htm> (Accessed 19 April 2007).

¹⁰ www.telsociety.org.uk (Accessed 19 April 2007).

¹¹ Guggenheim Museum, *The Art of the Motorcycle*. (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2001).

¹² The Guggenheim Foundation asserts that the Ducati 916 to be the most beautiful motorcycle ever made. This assertion is debateable, especially by the present day custom motorcycle builder.

¹³ <http://bid.berkeley.edu/bidclass/readings/benjamin.html> (Accessed 20 April 2007). Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction*. An essay of 1936.

¹⁴ Mention Harley Davidson and many emotive images are produced to a broad section of the public. A mention of Brough Superior or Vincent conjures up images of a superior British product to the motorcycle enthusiast. All these marques appear in the exhibition.

and Bauhaus, contain elements within them pertinent to motorcycling engineering and design. Futurism's obsession with speed and motion found much that was felt to be appropriate in the motorcycle as the relevant plates in chapter six show.¹⁵ An overwhelming obsession with speed was not apparent in British motorcyclists. The continental approach to road-policing was possibly different, considering their lack of hesitation in allowing road racing.¹⁶ Art Deco enhanced several examples of motorcycle design, whilst Bauhaus concepts can be found in the construction of some of the vehicles. The concept of the streamlining of motor vehicles has been explored by David Gartman, with the conclusion that it was used to comply with the subliminal desires of the purchaser, whilst at the same time affirming the majority of motorcar driver's lack of interest in the workings of their vehicle at least in America.¹⁷ During the period under discussion, streamlined motorcycles did exist, more for reasons of weather protection than aesthetics. They were much in a minority. The majority of British motorcyclists appear to have been interested in the mechanical function of their vehicles, preferring ease of access for maintenance.

The historiography of the cinema in Britain tends to concentrate upon the phenomenon's cultural influence upon the population. McKibben notes that throughout the interwar period, 'The cinema was profoundly important to English cultural life.'¹⁸ Cinematic viewing was a means by which the British could view their society and the wider world. In

¹⁵ Article four of the Manifesto of Futurism: We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. Cited in Harrison, C. & Wood, P., (eds.), *Art in Theory, 1900 – 1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993). p.147.

¹⁶ For an insight into the continental attitude towards motor racing, see Adair, D., 'Spectacles of speed and endurance: the formative years of motor racing in Europe,' in Thoms, D., Holden, L. & Claydon, T., *The Motor Car and Popular Culture...* chapter 9.

¹⁷ Gartman, D., *Auto Opium...* p.64. As Charles Kettering, head of General Motors Research Corporation, stated in 1927, 'At first when cars were novelties, people were interested in what made them go. Now they wanted to be unconscious of the mechanism.'

¹⁸ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures...* p.455.

a piece of work investigating the British film industry and that of the United States, based in Hollywood, Miles and Smith note:

‘The role of a mass leisure activity like cinema in constructing a perspective on the world along with all the other institutional pressures at work in a highly developed society such as that of interwar Britain may well have been formidable.’¹⁹

So potentially influential was this medium that it was considered to be a threat to the status quo. In particular, films from the United States were considered to foster a possible disruptive influence to the stable social hierarchy.²⁰ These fears led to formal and informal constraints being placed upon their viewing, such as censorship. By the late 1930s this threat was considered to have subsided as a result of the better quality of British films and a perceived resistance to indoctrination from America by the viewing public.²¹ The subject of the motorcycle in films has until recently been in the main overlooked as an area for academic research. Two of the main literary contributions here are Mike Seate’s *Two Wheels on Two Reels* and Bill Osgerby’s *Biker, Truth and Myth: How the Original Cowboy of the Road Became the Easy Rider of the Silver Screen*, both of which tend to concentrate more specifically upon the genre of ‘biker movies’ beginning with those from the post Second World War period, to the present. Seate’s main area of research concerns the influence these films had upon a generation of motorcyclists, in providing substance for a rebellious sub-culture. The interwar or earlier presence of the motorcycle in film is paid scant regard, possibly because there is little evidence to support a claim that previous to the Second World War, a sub-culture based upon feelings of youthful rebellion, centring around the motorcycle existed, particularly in Britain.²² Osgerby provides another useful insight into motorcycle films. His work traces the development of the biker movie,

¹⁹ Miles, P. and Smith, P., *Cinema, Literature & Society*. (London: Croom Helm, 1987). p.117.

²⁰ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures...* p.455.

²¹ Ibid, p.456.

²² Seate, M., *Two Wheels on Two Reels: A history of Biker Movies*. (New Hampshire: Whitehorse, 2000).

and shows a notable contrast with the film industry's inclusion of this form of transport in its output of the interwar period.²³ The findings of these authors supports the assertion that motorcycling did not appear on the motion picture screen purely as a form of sensationalism until the late 1940s, but that it could be enjoyed vicariously in the cinema during the interwar period or earlier via a selection of newsreels concerning sporting events, such as trials, speedway or the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy races. Also, manufacturers produced specific documentary type films designed as means towards positive propaganda for the movement and its industry. The motorcycle also appeared in mainstream cinema productions designed for popular consumption, in cameo roles as a familiar mode of transport. It had not as yet been attributed with the cult status associated with the later films of the biker genre, especially in Britain, due to economic and social reasons associated with post-war austerity.²⁴

Turning to an historical analysis of interwar musical tastes, McKibbin has stated that the majority of the English were attached to two main musical forms: middlebrow and popular.²⁵ By these the author meant those pieces of classical music which had become well-known or were less intellectually demanding than some classical works, and popular commercial music designed for mass-consumption which was also subject to American influence epitomized in the genres of jazz and ragtime.²⁶ Popular tunes with a motorcycling theme existed, albeit much in a minority, being mainly found as novelty tunes. There was no canon of tunes associated with motorcycling during this period; in for

²³ Osgerby, B., *Biker, Truth and Myth: How the Original Cowboy of the Road Became the Easy Rider of the Silver Screen*. (Lewes: The Lyons Press, 2005).

²⁴ Two of the most influential films which turned the motorcycle into a cult symbol representing rebellion were Stanley Kramer's, *The Wild One*, of 1954, which portrayed events which took place at a rally in Hollister in the United States, and familiarised the public with motorcycle clubs, and Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda's, *Easy Rider* of 1969, which was a mixture exploiting the psychedelic drug scene and customised motorcycles with a road trip theme.

²⁵ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures...* p.386.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p.390.

instance the same way that some rock 'n' roll music inspired the rockers of the 1960s.²⁷ Perhaps the most quoted example of academic research into this field is Paul Willis's work on two of the dominant youth cultures of the late 1960's, the motorbike boys and the hippies, found that music was an important intrinsic part of both sub-cultures during this time. Willis found the musical taste of the former to be highly distinctive and relatively devoid of eclecticism. More interestingly, he claims that the style of music preferred by the rockers to be a basis for their 'fundamental ontological security, style, gesture, speech, rough horseplay – their whole social ambience – seemed to owe something to the confidence and muscular style of the early rock 'n' roll.'²⁸ Osgerby identifies the mid-1950s as a time when British pop music became a major influence upon the stylistic traits of contemporary teenagers.²⁹ This is linked with the development of separate teenage identities, earnings, and fashion. That such a phenomenon did not appear to have existed during the interwar period is in itself interesting because it sheds some light upon the needs of those riding motorcycles at the time, who appear to have been content to enjoy mainstream music without the need for a type which they could identify as their own and which constitutes an important part of present day and earlier motorcycling sub-culture. Also, if it is true that an affinity with a particular musical form can provide as Willis asserts a kind of unifying force for a sub-culture particularly amongst the young, the lack of this during the interwar years enforces the notion that motorcycling was radically different at that time. Motorcycling during this era was not bound by youthful rebelliousness, rather a form of paternalism, which was most in evidence within the social hierarchies of the organised clubs, which held the pastime in great seriousness.

²⁷ And indeed a certain form of motorcycle, the café racer which was designed to be a fast machine used for races as long as a Rock and Roll tune, or some Rock tunes of the 70s and 80s inspired a later generation of rider.

²⁸ Willis, P., *Profane Culture*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) p.35.

²⁹ Osgerby, B., *Youth in Britain Since 1945*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) p.41.

The various mediums, in which this form of transport appeared, were able to convey the experience of motorcycling with varying degrees of success. Setting aside the image of the motorcycle held by some sectors of society, as being a dangerous, polluting form of transport, which has been dealt with to some extent in a previous chapter on legislation, the problems to be covered will include how the physical and emotional experiences of being a motorcyclist were portrayed and how the machine was artistically represented. In literature for example, as much importance lay in the imagination of the reader as in the writer's skill, with the former's experience of the machine being a contributor to its literary legitimacy. In music this was less important because the examples found were less concerned with portraying the experience of riding as with social interaction in for instance the machine being a catalyst for courting couples to get together or in advertising jingles to sell machines. Film was the easiest and best form by which the act of riding could be experienced vicariously, but it too had the fault of the audience having to remain in their seats, and be passive observers of the process. In some forms of art, particularly Futurism, the machine was glorified as a form of modernist technology. The appearance of the machine could be exaggerated or portrayed as accurately as possible, according to the whim of the artist. Attempts were made to achieve the experience of motion, but as with other media, this could only be at second hand.

Turning to analysis of the findings concerning literature will provide an answer to the question of how the pastime was placed within this genre. To completely cover the entire published works of English literature for references to motorcycling during this period, is a task the enormity of which places it into a position of almost impossible impracticality

even given the availability of an internet investigation or the various library catalogues.³⁰

A selection of literary genres has been investigated. Some contain references to motorcycling, either as intrinsically important to the plot or in cameo roles. These have been revealed either through past acquaintance or by references to them in other works.

Various intrepid motorcyclists published literary works, which enhanced the popular genre of travel literature during this period.³¹ That they had time or opportunity to embark upon journeys worthy of communication suggests authors with sufficient time and resources, which in turn places them within a social class suitably endowed. Why was such a form of literature popular? One answer lies in the ease by which the reader can experience armchair travel without the cost or danger involved in the real journey. Travel literature, especially relating to motorcycling, has become exceedingly popular in the modern era.³² Whether it was as popular during the inter-war period is uncertain, although likely, if it is accepted that the motor vehicle's increasing availability resulted in a desire to travel which could, if funds did not permit ownership, be experienced at second hand, by the armchair traveller.

³⁰ A search of the British Library Integrated Catalogue, http://catalogue.bl.uk/F/?func=file&file_name=login-bl-list (Accessed 19 April 2007), revealed over 500 results, relating to motorcycling or motorcyclist for the years 1920 or 1930. It was an unsatisfactory method in that it did not keep within the criteria of year published.

³¹ For example, the film made during the journey enhanced the literary representation of Theresa Wallach and Florence Blenkiron's trip through Africa in the 1930s on a motorcycle and sidecar. Both have recently been re-published and have added to the great number of such works, which have appeared in recent years. See Wallach, T., *The Rugged Road...* Wartime experiences were recalled in literary form at this time, both as a means by which the writer would show the horror and futility of war, and possibly as a form of psychological release. A notable example where the subject under study is the main one of the book being the First World War reminiscences of a South African motorcycle corps priest and missionary, which mixed motorcycling stories with Christianity. This tale laid strong emphasis on the rugged nature of the machines especially on the primitive roads. See Ashley, F. J., *With a Motor-bike in the Bush*. (London: Blackie & Son, 1938). Also of note is Robert Edison Fulton, *One Man Caravan*, whose round the world trip by Douglas machine, remains an inspiring read.

³² A search of the website of contemporary bookseller, Amazon confirms this, given the plethora of titles.

The motorcycle appeared in other forms of literature of the period, both as an intrinsic entity, in the many short stories which appeared in the periodicals, in which the machine was a means of transporting the reader and rider into adventures, and as an incidental element within longer novels, where the machine was used as a means of carrying on the plot or sub-plot within the text. This part of the chapter will analyse these two elements. The two main motorcycling journals, *The Motor Cycle*, and *Motor Cycling* as well as the lesser well-known monthly magazines such as *The Motorcyclist Review*, were regular hosts to articles contributed by authors, which fit into the category of the short story.³³ These could be further divided into articles of the travelogue type, of actual journeys made by motorcycle, and the fictional type, where the machine takes the rider into situations, which may or may not have been out of the common range of experience, such as trans-continental journeys, but have been included because they were considered to be of entertainment value to the target audience. These usually included incidents to which the motorcycling public could relate subjectively, such as weather or road conditions, the reliability and efficiency of the machine, or the environment through which the traveller passed. Although attempts were made to relate the emotions and physical experiences of using a motorcycle, these were less successful, drawing the conclusion that the majority of the audience would have to have been motorcyclists to fully appreciate this side of the story.

The images and functions of literature relating to motorcycling during this era are a subject that has been generally neglected by academics. There are exceptions to this, notably in research done into the incidences of motorcycles appearing or their influence in

³³ www.wordiq.com/definition/Short_story (Accessed 19 April 2007). The short story, as a form in writing, is prose writing of less than 10,000 to 20,000 words (and usually more than 500 words), which may or may not have a narrative arc. Narrative arcs are broad sketches of the high and low points of the dramatic development of the story. i.e. setup, confrontation, resolution.

the works of Dorothy L. Sayers, whose writing on the subject was legitimised and made more believable by her being a rider³⁴, or T. E. Lawrence, whose riding exploits remain legendary.³⁵ Motorcycles in some literature appear as representations of transport, motion, speed, sport, excitement, in certain forms of rebellion; in others a kind of utilitarianism. In all literary forms motorcycling represents the adoption of technology as a useful tool and in this sense is a means by which the user welcomes the new to replace or co-exist with the old in an act of transition between the two. This is especially true during the interwar period with some parts of society having to come to terms with recovering from the decline of some of the pre-war values, whilst facing a more technologically based future. Any study of literature concerning motorcycling during this period must take into account the importance of the artistic movement known as Modernism as the ideal way that this form of transport fits into its tenets. 'Literary mutation is an expression of and response to large-scale changes in the human world.'³⁶ A mention of motorcycling within a literary work represented the author's acceptance of the incursion of such technology into this world. An example of this lies in the memoirs of Ernest Hemingway, who became interested in cycle and motorcycle sport during his time in Paris.³⁷

³⁴ Dorothy L. Sayers was the most prolifically inclusive writer in the sense that the motorcycle held a place in some of her work. Her personal involvement in motorcycling included the ownership of a Neracar machine. Her husband, Mac Fleming was motoring correspondent of *News of the World* and often reported on motorcycling events. It is also claimed that the father of her child was the motorcycle racer, Bill White. Sayers' most strikingly motorcycle based piece of literature is included in the volume, *Lord Peter Views the Body*. In *Clouds of Witness*, one of the characters rides a 'much worn' Douglas with sidecar. Motorcycles appear in some context in several other pieces of Sayers' work including, *Unnatural Death*; *The Nine Tailors*; *Five Red Herrings*; *Have His Carcase* and *Gaudy Night*.

³⁵ See articles at Dr. Chris Willis' website at <http://www.chriswillis.freemove.co.uk/> (Accessed 19 April 2007), regarding Dorothy L. Sayers and regarding T. E. Lawrence at www.telsociety.org.uk (Accessed 19 April 2007).

³⁶ Berthoud, J., 'Literature and Drama' in Ford, B., (ed.), *Early 20th Century Britain: The Cambridge Cultural History*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). p.55.

³⁷ Hemingway, E., *A Moveable Feast*. (London: Cape, 1964). p.59-61. During his stay in Paris during the 1920s, this doyen of macho pursuits, was introduced to bicycle racing at the Velodrome d'Hiver by his friend Mike Ward, as a non-gambling replacement to following horse racing, during hard times. Large-engined tricycles ridden by 'entraineurs,' whose intention was to break the wind resistance for the riders, paced bicycles. Other more conventional forms of motorcycle racing are also mentioned.

Incidental references to motorcycling as well as the influx of the population into the countryside by other diverse means occur in novels and other literary forms during the period. It is here that the motorcycle's place in published writing is at its most relevant, as it represents transport technology encroaching upon rural England in its most attainable form, and points to significant changes in society, the adoption of new lifestyles being imposed whilst being met with various degrees of opposition from the existing ones. In J. B. Priestley's *The Good Companions* for instance, a Mr. Poppleby in an example of anti-progress and anti-modernism, expressed the opinion that cycle clubs were, 'more yuman' than other forms of travel.³⁸ Later, a sidecar-equipped machine is used in the plot as a conveyance by which a jilted lover pursues her former paramour, showing a willingness on the part of the writer to use motorcycles as exciting forms of pursuit vehicles.³⁹ In H. V. Morton's *In Search of England*, a similar machine is used as transport for honeymooners.⁴⁰ It is likely that such machines were included in literary plots because of their common usage and popularity during this period amongst a large section of society, and presumably a similar section of the readership. The readership would have found nothing unusual or eccentric in their use. Ordinary people rode motorcycles in these literary incidents. There is little evidence to suggest that motorcycling was considered in any way outlandish or in the main anti-social, apart from instances in which the speed limit is being broken, which was a common occurrence. It was portrayed as being both utilitarian and fun.⁴¹ One of the first books in which motorcycling took an important role

³⁸ Priestley, J. B., *The Good Companions*. (Kingswood: William Heinemann, 1931). p.125. Here, the speaker shows a dislike for too much technology. Cycling is acceptable if man powered. If engine-powered, less so.

³⁹ Ibid p.167.

⁴⁰ Morton, H. V., *In Search of England*. (London: Methuen, 1931). p.126.

⁴¹ Henry Williamson is of relevance here both as a motorcyclist, owning a Norton and several other machines during the First World War, and a writer who made reference to them in his work. Williamson wrote many books on growing up in England during Edwardian times and through the 1920s and 30s. Amongst these, as series called *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* contains some reference to motorcycling. Most notably, motorcycles are mentioned in the fourth book of the series, *How Dear is Life* (London: Macdonald, 1954) and others set around the period of the First World War and immediately afterwards. In

was directed at children. The first of the *Tom Swift* series of books, published by the American publishers Stratemeyer depict motorcycling as a noisy, dirty, and complicated form of technology, best mastered by the intelligent.⁴² It is interesting to note that the Excelsior motorcycle depicted in the story was later advertised by the company as suitable for a child to use:

Fig. 6.1. *American Excelsior advertisement, circa 1910.*

Makes more than a mile a minute!
Yet safe for a ten-year boy to ride
 Any ten-year boy can ride an Excelsior safely because it's simplest, easiest machine to run. Clutch operated by left-hand grip—throttle by right.

Excelsior only motorcycle with entire control in handle bars—holds World's Speed Records, yet not built for racing. All victories, won with stock design engine—same as in machine you buy—prove its power and easy riding.

Parents—Keep your boys at home—buy them Excelsiors—they'll be contented. Write today for catalog.

Excelsior Single, 4-5 H. P., price \$200
 Excelsior Twin, 7-10 H. P., price \$250

Excelsior Motor Mfg. & Supply Co.
 Dept. A Chicago

EXCELSIOR World's Records	
1 mile, 36 sec. flat	
First motorcycle to attain a speed of 100 miles an hour.	
2 miles	1.12 4-5
3 miles	1.50 3-5
4 miles	2.29 4-5
5 miles	3.07 3-5
10 miles	6.18
30 miles	20.18 1-5
50 miles	33.55 1-5
75 miles	50.55 2-5
100 mi.	68.01 4-5



Few good agents wanted

Source: <http://www.tomswift.info/homepage/mcycle.html> (Accessed 19 April 2007).

The early years of the twentieth century are considered to be ones which saw revolutionary ideas in art come to the fore, and replace the ideas of complacency which were in evidence during the final years of Queen Victoria's reign.⁴³ Some of these ideas will be explored in the next part of the chapter to provide an answer to the question of the extent to which motorcycling was affected by and influenced these processes. Most of

addition to this in *Genius of Friendship*, T. E. Lawrence. (London: Faber & Faber, 1941), Williamson writes of his acquaintance with the famous rider.

⁴² Appleton, V., *Tom Swift & His Motorcycle: or Fun and Adventures on the Road*. (New Jersey: Grosset & Dunlap, 1910).

⁴³ Ford, B., (ed.), *Early 20th Century Britain...* p.157.

these emerged from Europe, where coincidentally, the motorcycle was developed in an atmosphere, less restricted, socially and legally, than in England.

As a first example, Futurism was a movement in music, art and literature, which emerged in the early years of the twentieth century in Europe. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, a well-known literary figure in France and Italy produced the first Futurist manifesto in 1909 in the form of a prose poem.⁴⁴ Its message, directed generally at the young generation, was that it should seek inspiration in contemporary life; be emancipated from tradition and show contempt for prevalent values in society especially in more established conceptions of art.⁴⁵ This movement is relevant because part of its artistic content dealt with the pictorial representation of transport, and the motion it produced. Some of its views could also be associated with the Bohemian lifestyle of a certain type of motorcyclist. Aircraft, motorcars and more relevant here, the motorcycle were dealt with from a Futurist perspective. Futurists attempted to depict how the human frame adapted to speed and motion, and various depictions of the motorcycle and rider were produced to show this. For example, Giacomo Balla's main concern was the search for a valid pictorial equivalent of motion,⁴⁶ and synthetic statements of velocity.⁴⁷ Other Futurists realised that their intended portrayal of motion regarding the subject of motorcycling, could be related to a similar melding of man and machine, which was inherent in the bicycle, the predecessor of the powered variety. In this way they acknowledged the ancestry of the latter with the former mode of transport. Examples of this are Gerardo Dottori's 1916 picture, *Ciclista* and Fillia's *Bicicletta – Fusione di Paesaggio. Idolo Meccanico*, of 1924.⁴⁸ If it is accepted that the unity of man and machine is most strong between the cyclist and his

⁴⁴ Martin, M. W., *Futurist Art and Theory 1909–1915*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968). p.35.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p.38.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.174.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.179.

⁴⁸ See Plates 6.1 and 6.2.

machine, purely because the rider provides the motive force to power the machine, then it must be true that the motorcyclist will be less a part of his machine than the cyclist, because the engine provides motive power. This is evident in the artistic works of the Futurist's, which depicted motorcycles. The machines are shown at their best, in motion, with the depiction of velocity being the prime concern of the artist. The riders are shown crouching low in the saddles, the primary intention being to become more streamlined to achieve greater speed. A by-product of the rider's attitude is that they appear to be attempting to become

Plate 6.1. *Gerardo Dottori, Ciclista, 1916.*



Source: Crispolti, E., *Futurismo 1909 -1944 Arte, Architettura, Spettacolo, Grafica, Letteratura*. (Milan: Mazzotta, 2001). p.301.

Plate 6.2. *Fillia, Bicicletta – Fusione di Paesaggio. Idolo Meccanico, 1924.*



Source: Crispolti, E., *Futurismo 1909 -1944 Arte, Architettura, Spettacolo, Grafica, Letteratura*. (Milan: Mazzotta, 2001). p.342.

more at one with their machine, or a part of it. This attempt by art to mould man and machine into a single entity is of interest because it could be a reaction to the intrusion of technology into contemporary society. Examples of this lie in Ugo Giannattasio's, 1918 painting, *Il Motociclista* in which the rider has almost become completely obscured by the machine, (which, due to the styling and the oversized tyres, looks remarkably modern), and Ivo Pannaggi's, *Centauro*, of 1931, a more realistic portrayal of a speed record attempt.⁴⁹ Another interpretation of motorcycling, concentrated upon the motion of the vehicle. Giacomo Balla's artistic work, *Velocita di Motocicletta*, of 1913 exemplifies this.⁵⁰ The Futurist movement was Modernist because it dealt enthusiastically with modern subjects and inventions. A positive attitude towards velocity as depicted in their motorcycling art, agrees with and affirms the Modernist attitude towards technical progress in general. This also affirms Marinetti's initial Futurist manifesto in that it turns

⁴⁹ See Plates 6.3 and 6.4.

⁵⁰ See Plate 6.5.

its back upon the pace of life of the previous century. Riding a motorcycle during this period could have been the equivalent, if unintentional similar statement of the acceptance of new technology. Futurism was a continental artistic movement. There appears to have been little interest in Futurism per se in the British motorcycling journals, nor is there any evidence of a Futurist element within the motorcycling movement. The interest in motorcycles that existed in Futurism was a one-sided affair.

Artistic styles in advertisements for various motorcycling products from complete machines to the smallest component were as diverse as the components themselves, although they invariably depicted the act of motorcycling as fashionable and stylish. Variations depended on their country of origin and the year in which they were produced. No exact style for motorcycle and other forms of transport advertising existed but there

Plate 6.3. *Ugo Giannattasio, Il Motociclista, 1918.*



Source: Crispolti, E., *Futurismo 1909 -1944 Arte, Architettura, Spettacolo, Grafica, Letteratura*. (Milan: Mazzotta, 2001). p.317.

Plate 6.4. *Ivo Pannaggi, Centauro, 1931.*



Source: Crispolti, E., *Futurismo 1909 -1944 Arte, Architettura, Spettacolo, Grafica, Letteratura*. (Milan: Mazzotta, 2001). p.365.

Plate 6.5. *Giacomo Balla, Velocita di Motocicletta, 1913.*



Source: Crispolti, E., *Futurismo 1909 -1944 Arte, Architettura, Spettacolo, Grafica, Letteratura*. (Milan: Mazzotta, 2001). p. 232.

was a definite trend to portray motorcycling as being progressive. Such advertising was as eclectic as the taste of the era allowed. Patriotism could be a major selling point in such advertisements, as an early example from France, complete with reference to Marianne, the embodiment of their national spirit shows.⁵¹ The picture is of importance because it depicts the symbolic representation of the old rural ways accepting the new at a time when a Modernist movement, in this case in the material form of the motorcycle was emerging on the Continent as well as in Britain. Marianne looks benignly upon, 'La plus vaste usine du monde.' Moving further into the period under scrutiny, a 1932 advertisement for Douglas machines exists which hints at a decline in social deference. The rider, who could be middle class or lower, judging by his attire, keeps pace with or moves ahead of the hunting pack. The picture shows new ideas triumphant over the old ways, and is radical in that it portrays the upper class horsemen coming second place to the lower class motorcyclist.⁵² A diversity of style and social customs can be found in two posters for Triumph machines from the 1930s. In the British version, the woman is a decadent flapper and the rider, sitting astride a sporting single, displays confidence and affluence. The German advertisement is darker and more austere. The woman is wrapped up to fend off the cold, whilst her companion, (pipe-smoking whilst dealing with petrol) owns a more frugal two-stroke machine.⁵³ Changes in German society became apparent also through this medium. The increasingly militaristic bias, which coincided with the rise of Fascism, was evidenced in motorcycle advertisements. An example of this lies in a picture representing BMW machines. The rider is depicted in uniform, and the form of the advertisement displays a confidence in the product, being devoid of anything but the most

⁵¹ See Plate 6.6.

⁵² See plate 6.7. This assumes that the horsemen were upper-class and not lower down the social scale. The reverse could apply to the motorcyclist.

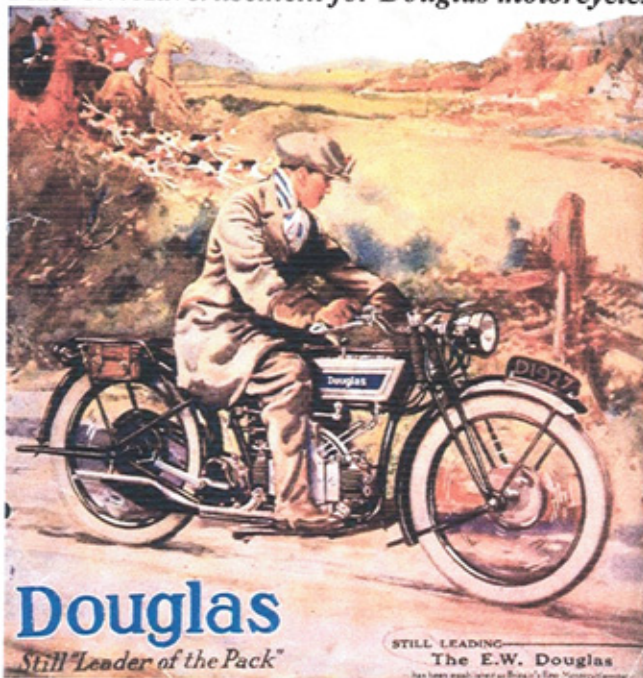
⁵³ See plates 6.8 and 6.9. The two companies, although originally linked by the founder, Siegfried Bettmann, were by now separate entities, the latter having split from the Coventry concern in 1930.

Plate 6.6. *Marianne symbol of France, an early advertisement for Clement.*



Source: Prior, R., *Motorcycling, The Golden Years*. (London: Tiger Books, 1994). p.14.

Plate 6.7. *Advertisement for Douglas motorcycles, 1932.*



Source: Prior, R., *Motorcycling, The Golden Years*. (London: Tiger Books, 1994). p38.

Plate 6.8. *An English advertisement for Triumph circa 1930.*



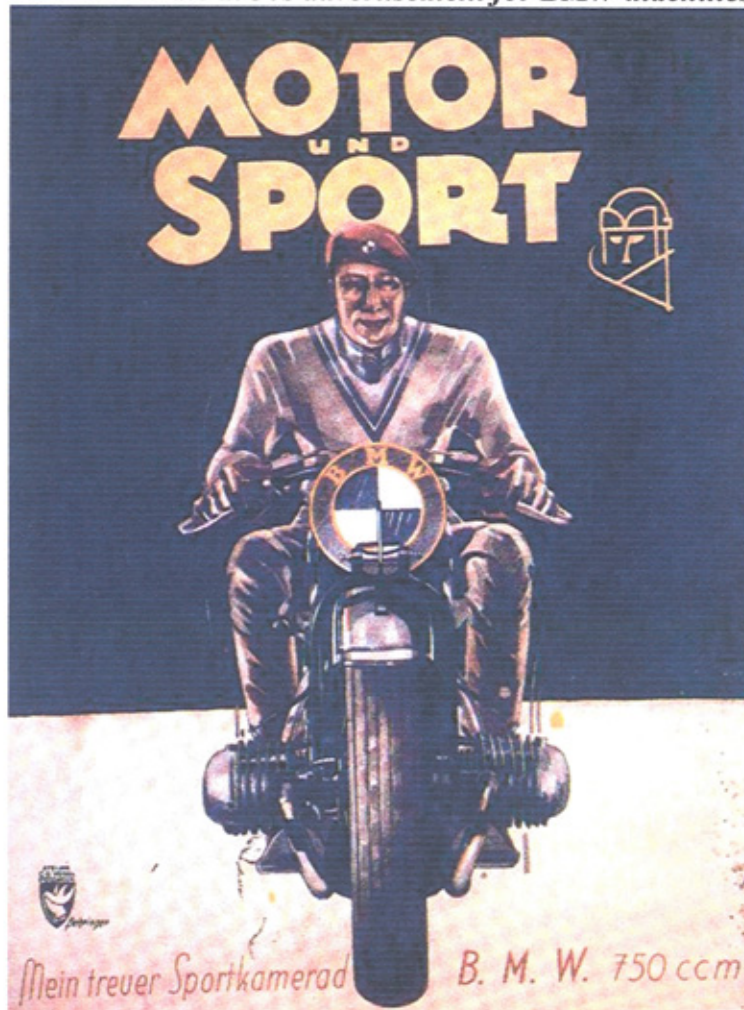
Source: Prior, R., *Motorcycling, The Golden Years*. (London: Tiger Books, 1994). p.42.

Plate 6.9. *A German comparison, known as TWN in Britain.*



Source: Prior, R., *Motorcycling, The Golden Years*. (London: Tiger Books, 1994). p.43.

Plate 6.10. *Late 1930s advertisement for BMW machines.*



Source: Prior, R., *Motorcycling, The Golden Years*. (London: Tiger Books, 1994). Frontispiece.

basic information.⁵⁴ The above examples, being taken from the same source, are not exhaustive. They provide pictorial evidence of differences in the societies from which the machines originated. An in-depth analysis of this form of art as a means of enhancing the social history of the inter-war period would be a useful follow-up to this work.

The Art Deco movement, which flourished in Europe and the United States during the twenties and thirties, can be defined as an eclectic set of styles, which evolved from traditional forms and motifs such as Ancient Egyptian, the Orient, and African art in the 1910s and 1920s through to its influence upon streamlining in the 1930s.⁵⁵ This diversification makes Art Deco hard to define. In the year 1925, the Paris Exposition Internationale des Artes Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes from which it derived its name took place.⁵⁶ This art form was increasingly influenced by the growing impact of the machine and during the 1930s, led to the introduction of streamlined forms, which were derived from the principles of aerodynamic design.⁵⁷ What influence did Art Deco have upon the motorcycle? The streamlining of household products is thought to have arisen paradoxically as a result of the Depression, as a means of attempting to increase the desirability of consumer durables, allowing, '...de-sublimated gratification of displaced desires.'⁵⁸ By the use of cheap mass produced castings, form was to become more important than function. This idea was most popular in the United States, but was to spread to Europe. Some contemporary motor vehicles were given the same treatment.⁵⁹ The influence of Art Deco on the design and functionality of motorcycles during this

⁵⁴ See plate 6.10. This provides an example of cultural stereotyping.

⁵⁵ Wood, G., *Essential Art Deco*. (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 2003). p.16.

⁵⁶ http://www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/1157_art_deco/virtual/gallery1/paris1925.htm (Accessed 19 April 2007).

⁵⁷ Duncan, A., *Art Deco*. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988). p.8 The practice of streamlining motorcars has been analysed in Gartman, D., *Auto Opium...*

⁵⁸ Gartman, D., *Auto Opium...* p.165. Here the buyer displaces feelings of frustration with their working life, by purchasing articles produced during it.

⁵⁹ Wood, G., *Essential Art Deco*, p.77.

period is as difficult to assert, as the art form is to define. The majority of motorcycles made during the twenties and thirties were produced under the utilitarian premise that function was more important than form. Motorcycles were essentially utilitarian devices, and motorcyclists were in general conservative in taste, being inclined towards a preference for what had been proven to work rather than gimmickry. This was particularly true for British machines. A search for Art Deco influences in the design of British motorcycles through the available literature reveals that very few machines were built with the criteria of form over function as being of paramount importance. Where streamlining did occur, it was in special machines where speed was important. Enclosure of engine parts was common as a means of attracting buyers not keen on oily engines or as a basic attempt at weather protection. There were, as is usually the case, exceptions to these utilitarian principles. The 1924 Pullin-Groom machine employed a radical pressed-steel frame, which although due to its open design would be popular with some women riders, was soon to cease production, due to a lack of orders from riders with conservative tastes.⁶⁰ One contemporary journal reader, enforced conventional views, with an illustration of an impossible machine, based upon a famous streamlined railway engine. It was, the writer claimed, impossible to produce.⁶¹ Innovative design along the lines of Art Deco was more common in Europe than Britain. The machine which most fits the Art Deco label is the 1930 Majestic 350, a French product which incorporated concepts such as full-enclosure and hub-centre steering.⁶² Germany's Megola with its open frame also embraced enclosure as a design exercise, rather than as a means of hiding the engine.⁶³

⁶⁰ See Plate 6.11.

⁶¹ See Plate 6.12.

⁶² See Plate 6.13.

⁶³ See Plate 6.14. Here, the engine was in the front wheel.

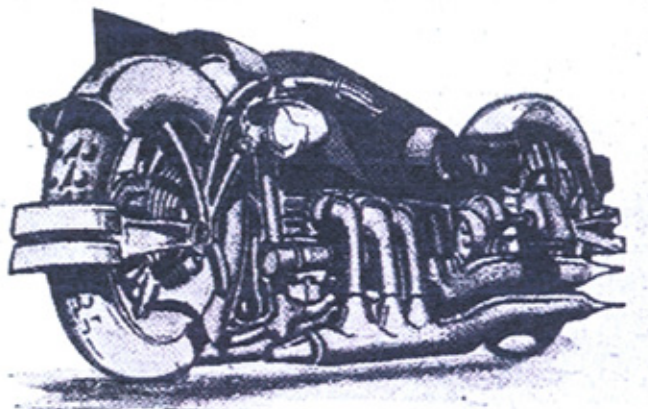
Another German design, the Orionette, attempted to blend its petrol tank into the framework, to create flowing lines.⁶⁴

Plate 6.11. *Pullin-Groom 1924 England*. As an example of the conservative nature of British riders, this machine soon ceased production.



Source: Ayton, C., Holliday, B., Posthumus, C. & Winfield, M., *The History of Motorcycling*. (London: Orbis Publishing, 1999). p.99.

Plate 6.12. *Art Deco influence in one man's imagination*. Streamline design with acknowledgement to the A4 Pacific class steam engine *Mallard*.

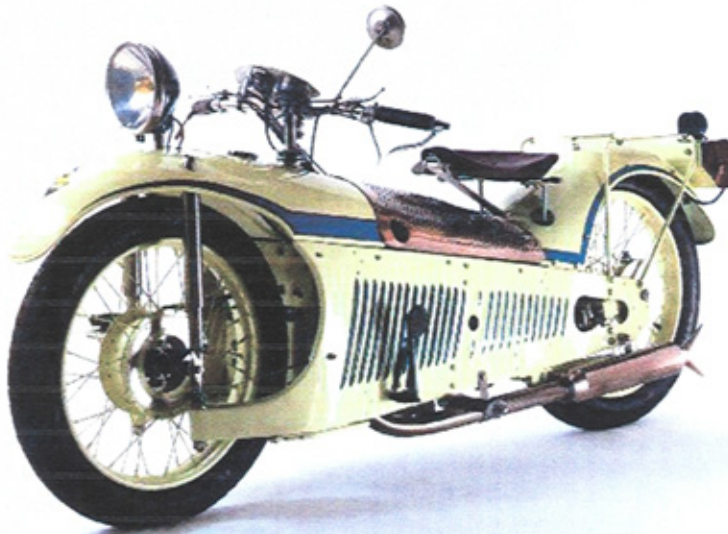


M. C. C.'s Mallet Special.

Source: *The Motor Cycle*, Feb 17th 1927 p.279.

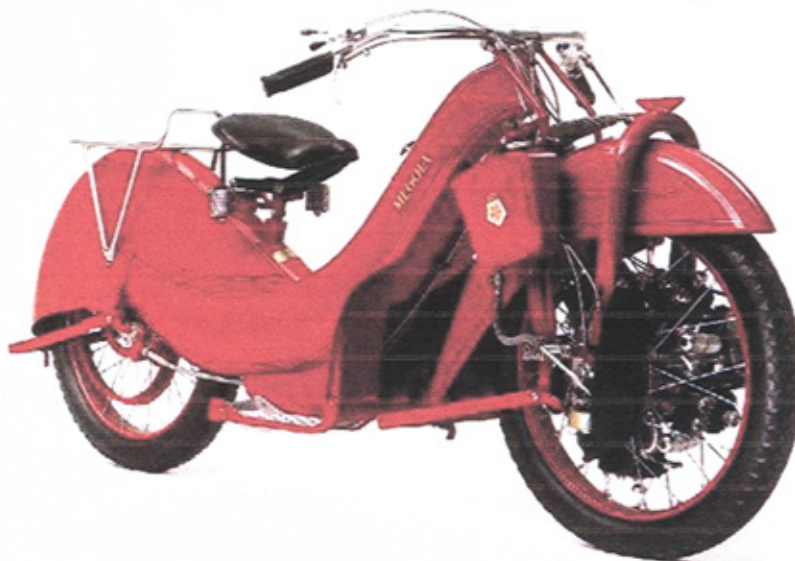
⁶⁴ See Plate 6.15. This idea was not new. Prior to saddle tanks, motorcycles usually had their petrol tanks strapped to the frame in this way. The Orionette is included because of the successful way its tank was made to flow with the general lines of the frame.

Plate 6.13. *Majestic 350, 1930 France. A definitive Art Deco motorcycle.*



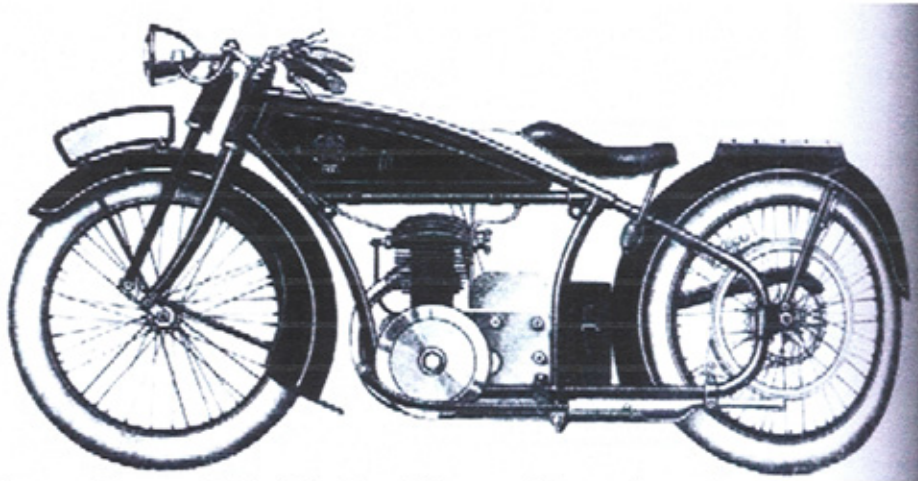
Source: Guggenheim Museum, *The Art of the Motorcycle*. (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2001). p.168.

Plate 6.14. *Megola Sport, 1922 Germany. Another radical European design whose style was derived by the need for a flowing streamlined appearance.*



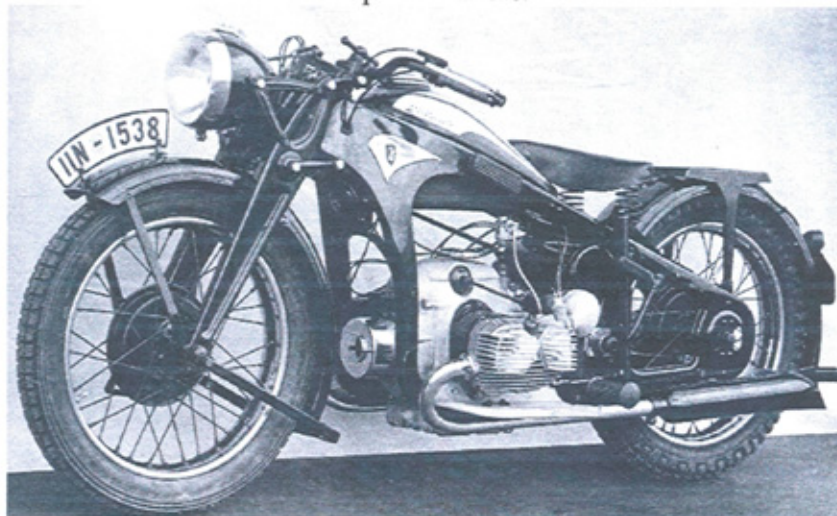
Source: Guggenheim Museum, *The Art of the Motorcycle*. (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2001). p.140.

Plate 6.15: *Orionette 350 1925 Germany*. Included here because of the way the tank blends into the framework.



Source: Tragatsch, E., *The New Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Motorcycles*. (London: Greenwich Editions, 2000). p.416.

Plate 6.16. **Zundapp KS500, 1936 Germany.** Frame designs of this type were used by several other central European makers.



Source: Ayton, C., Holliday, B., Posthumus, C. & Winfield, M., *The History of Motorcycling*. (London: Orbis Publishing, 1999). p.147.

Plate 6.17. **CZ 350, 1935 Czechoslovakia.**



Source: Ayton, C., Holliday, B., Posthumus, C. & Winfield, M., *The History of Motorcycling*. (London: Orbis Publishing, 1999). p.152.

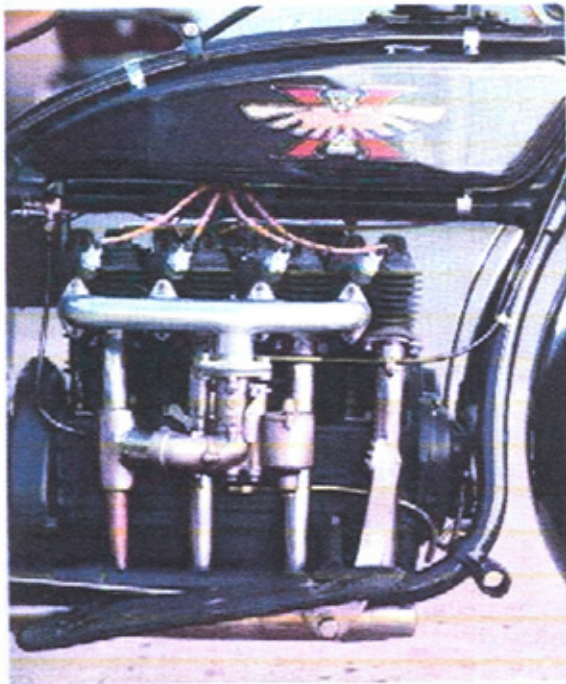
Some manufacturers produced machines where the framework enclosed the petrol tank, combining a pleasing design with a strong frame. Zundapp of Germany and CZ of Czechoslovakia are examples of this concept, which allowed the frame to overcome its purely utilitarian function.⁶⁵ These continental machines are included as valid comparisons with the British product. These and other makes appeared in the British motorcycling journals on numerous occasions. Another minor but artistically important area lies in tank badge design. Many manufacturers used tank badges as a means of creating a corporate icon, by which machines could be identified. The concept of the tank badge is one area where functionality was not important in that they did not affect machine performance. Instead, they were a means to inspire brand loyalty. Examples of Art Deco influence in tank badge design are common. The Ancient Egyptian influence on the American Henderson machine and the Czechoslovakian Jawa are of note.⁶⁶ Amongst British built machines the Art Deco design of the horse on Ariel machines is most striking, whilst the symbol adorning ABC machines of the early 1920s is evocative of contemporary discoveries by Howard Carter and Lord Caernarvon.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ See Plates 6.16 and 6.17.

⁶⁶ See Plates 6.18 and 6.19.

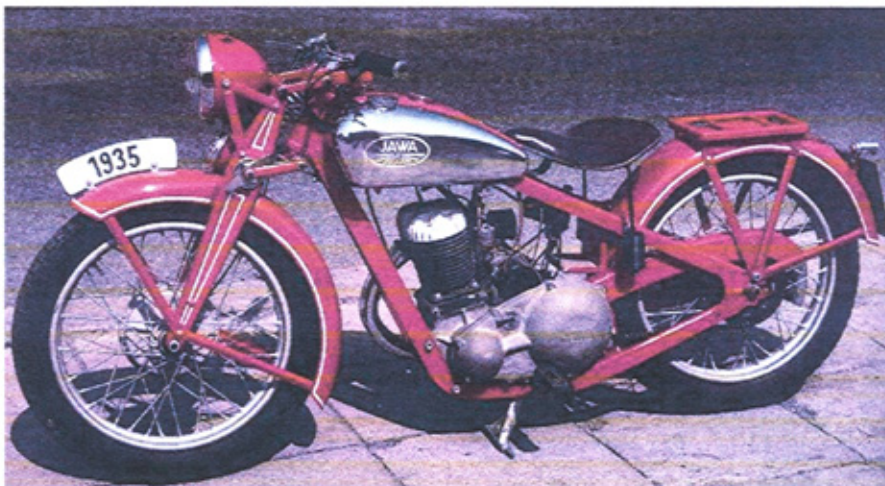
⁶⁷ See Plates 6.20 and 6.21.

Plate 6.18. *Art Deco Egyptian influence on tank of 1925 American Henderson.*



Source: Ayton, C., Holliday, B., Posthumus, C. & Winfield, M., *The History of Motorcycling*. (London: Orbis Publishing, 1999). p115.

Plate 6.19. *Jawa's tank badge is again reminiscent of Ancient Egyptian design popularised by Art Deco. They were made in Czechoslovakia.*



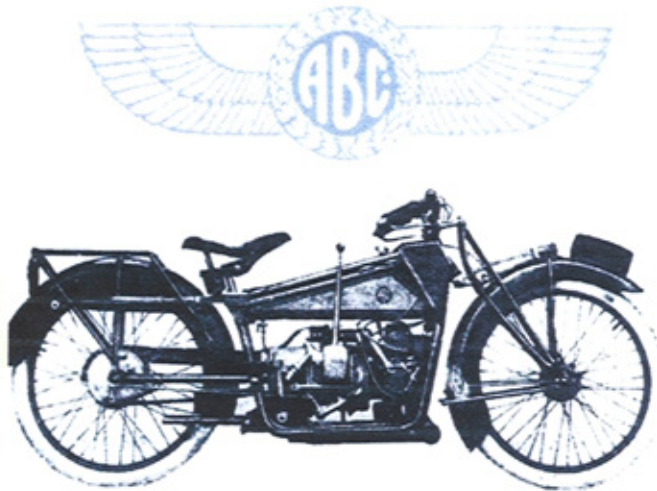
Source: Henshaw, P., *The Encyclopaedia of the Motorcycle*. (Anglesey: Regency House, 2001). p.204.

Plate 6.20. *Corporate symbol of the Ariel motorcycle.*



Source: *The Motor Cycle*, Jan 10th 1935 ads.p.7.

Plate 6.21: *Egyptian style company logo and tank badge on All British (engine) Company machine, 1921.* This illustrates the influence of the exotic upon design.



Source: Tragatsch, E., *The New Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Motorcycles*. (London: Greenwich Editions, 2000). p.114.

Influential in contemporary technical designs during this period, the Bauhaus movement is also relevant in this study. Walter Gropius (1883 –1969) was a major influence in the foundation of the philosophy of design, as director of the Bauhaus school, which flourished in Germany just after the First World War and was later to spread across the western world. The concept of design technology being run along the lines of the craftsman being an artist and visa-versa:

‘Architects, sculptors, painters, we must all return to the crafts! For art is not a ‘profession.’ There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman. The artist is the exalted craftsman.’⁶⁸

Although primarily concerned with architecture, Bauhaus philosophy encompassed many ideas conducive with motorcycle design. Bauhaus was concerned with social change, through the use of functional objects, geometrically designed in a fashion that made them relatively easy to mass-produce. Simplicity of design meant ease of assembly. The resulting machines, most often quoted as being epitomised in BMWs R32⁶⁹ or Moto Guzzi’s C4V⁷⁰, emphasised practicality, efficiency, and ‘...a reductive vocabulary of forms, (which) epitomise the ethos of the Machine Age.’⁷¹ Motorcycles designed following the Bauhaus philosophies were, ‘clean, lean, and devoid of ornamentation.’⁷² By following such a philosophy, the motorcycle designer could produce a successful machine, capable of fulfilling the needs of a broad spectrum of riders. The BMW machine was aimed at the touring rider, whilst the Moto Guzzi in this case was a successful racing machine.

⁶⁸ http://www.daysofleisure.com/writing/cat_design.html (Accessed 19 April 2007). Walter Gropius *Programm des Staatlichen Bauhauses (April 1919)*.

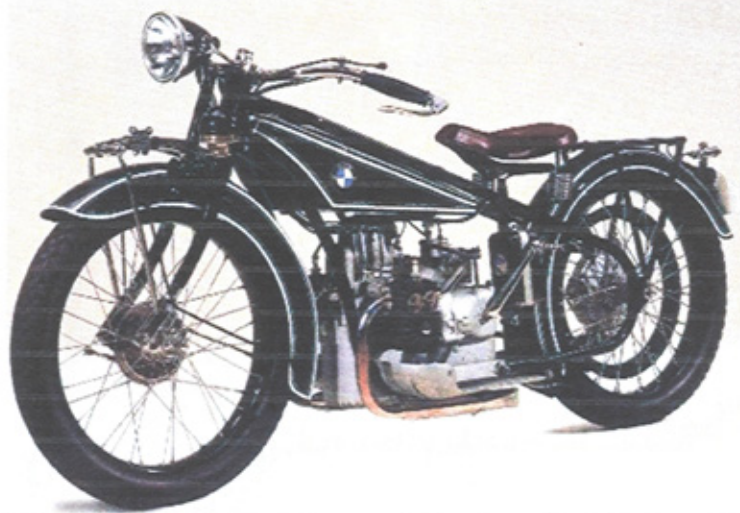
⁶⁹ See plate 6.22.

⁷⁰ See plate 6.23.

⁷¹ Guggenheim Museum Publications, *The Art of the Motorcycle*, p.137.

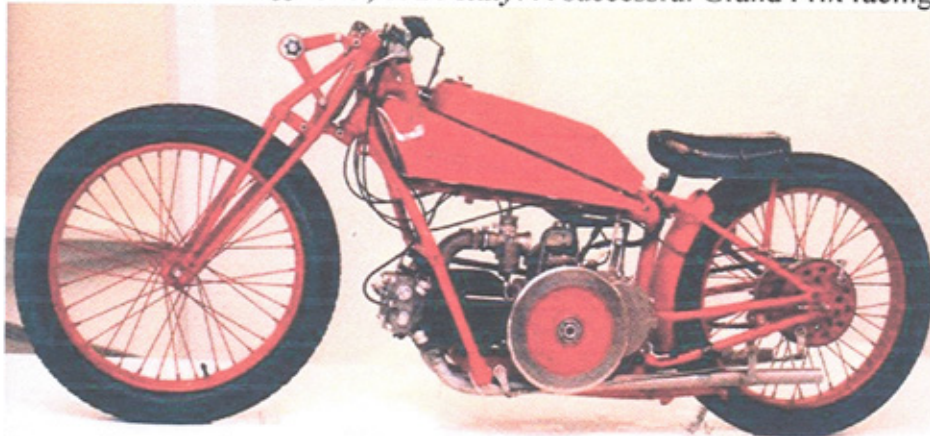
⁷² Ibid.

Plate 6.22. **BMW R32 1923 Germany.** Bauhaus inspired design in a touring motorcycle.



Source: Guggenheim Museum, *The Art of the Motorcycle*. (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2001). p.150.

Plate 6.23. **Moto Guzzi C4V, 1924 Italy.** A successful Grand Prix racing machine.



Source: Tragatsch, E., *The New Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Motorcycles*. (London: Greenwich Editions, 2000). p.369.

Several British motorcycle designers went to Europe to work for manufacturers there. This was due to the popularity of the British product, its sporting successes and the need for European manufacturers to emulate its performance. Amongst these, Walter Moore who went to design a German NSU racer to rival his previously designed Norton OHC machine. Bert le Vack, the chief designer of JAP engines, later joined Dougal Marchant, who went to work on Swiss Motosacoche machines after developing Blackburne engines. George Patchett, who earlier had aided George Brough, had most success on the Continent, working for FN, the Belgian company, and later with Jawa.⁷³ The extent to which these men were influenced by the above-mentioned artistic styles, is not known, their main task being primarily engine development for racing. Whether they were given a freer hand to indulge in experimental design work of such a nature, with greater ease is also debatable. Monetary issues may have been crucial to their decisions.

The ownership of a motorcycle was a great means towards social change in that it freed those who could afford one, to travel and through socialising with other riders, mix with other classes rather like the bicycle had done previously and was to continue to do. Machines made under a Bauhaus philosophy would have been easier to ride and maintain, more economical to purchase and run, and probably more reliable. Some members of the Bauhaus were forced to come to England by the Nazi regime. How did Bauhaus philosophy influence motorcycle design in Britain? Contemporary journals contain many illustrations of machines, which can be studied with a view towards establishing the design philosophy, if any, which governed their production, although it is likely that the main developing agency was the racetrack. Machines from both BMW and Moto Guzzi as well as from other continental producers were making incursions into the British

⁷³ Source: Loose documents at the VMCC archive.

dominated motorcycling race circuit, during this period and it is here that any design influence would have taken place.⁷⁴

It is important, when discussing the influential position of Bauhaus and other innovative design philosophies, to consider the place the customer held in the equation, which led to the finished article. Whether or not the motorcyclist was considered to be willing to try out new design concepts in their final form would influence whether these innovations would be included on the machine in its final form. This assumes that the wishes of the purchaser were considered to be of importance to the manufacturer. Whereas it is logical to assume that the rider would welcome improvements in areas such as braking, handling and performance, styling concepts might not be considered as important, and if more outlandish, might not sell machines. The conservative attitude of many riders is revealed in an editorial comment made in 1927 regarding the appearance of that year's models:

‘... 1927 models are exceedingly pleasing to the eye, the exceptions being divisible into two classes, namely, those which are unconventional and, being new, are not yet familiar, and those which appear to be the result of adaptation rather than deliberate design.’⁷⁵

This comment shows that the majority of motorcyclists of this period were considered to be relatively unwilling to have unnecessary innovation thrust upon them.⁷⁶ The size of the market and the number of manufacturers provided space for eccentricities and innovations to be tested.

⁷⁴ <http://www.iomtt.com> (Accessed 18 April 2007), will illustrate this with its database of TT winners.

⁷⁵ *The Motor Cycle*, Feb 17th 1927 p.228.

⁷⁶ British riders generally considered an ideal size for a motorcycle to be 500cc. A four stroke single, with side-valves was often adequate, and for the sporting rider, overhead valves provided more power. The persistent use of sprung saddles, no rear suspension and girder forks instead of the telescopic variety also illustrate the conservative nature of the British rider. There were as always exceptions to these cases.

All the successful motorcycling journals relied upon regular contributions from artists to supplement their photographic copy. There was still a successful career to be had for the skilful artist. Any perusal of modern motorcycle magazines will show a variety of such work. Amongst those operating during this period, Russell Brockbank, who provided sketches for *The Motor Cycle* as well as other motoring periodicals, during the 1930s, is perhaps one of the more famous. Brockbank most noted for his motoring cartoons, began working for *Punch* in 1939, and was to become its art editor in the 1950s.⁷⁷ Many examples of a satirical nature regarding motorcycling were published in this magazine during the period, and many more on other forms of transport, covering aspects as diverse as gender, sport, and the intrusion of the machine into the countryside.⁷⁸ Alongside the more frivolous illustrations provided to entertain and amuse the reader, motorcycling journals also contained engineering drawings of the latest innovations, to inform the more technically minded. Several groundbreaking instances occurred in this area during this time. In a March 1922 edition of *The Motor Cycle*, Max Millar had published the first fully-sectioned engine picture, (where parts of the engine such as sections of the barrel were omitted from the drawing to reveal the internal components,) which showed the component parts of Granville Bradshaw's proprietary 500cc oil cooled motor.⁷⁹ This was the first time that such an elaborate engine drawing had been seen in such a publication. Further to this, in December 1928, the first published picture of a fully-sectioned complete machine, that of Lacey's record-breaking Grindlay-Peerless Jap, which was the first to cover over 100 miles in an hour, was included by the same artist in the same magazine.⁸⁰ Another artist with a flair for engineering drawing, Frank Beak, took the process a step

⁷⁷ <http://www.punch.co.uk/> (Accessed 19 April 2007).

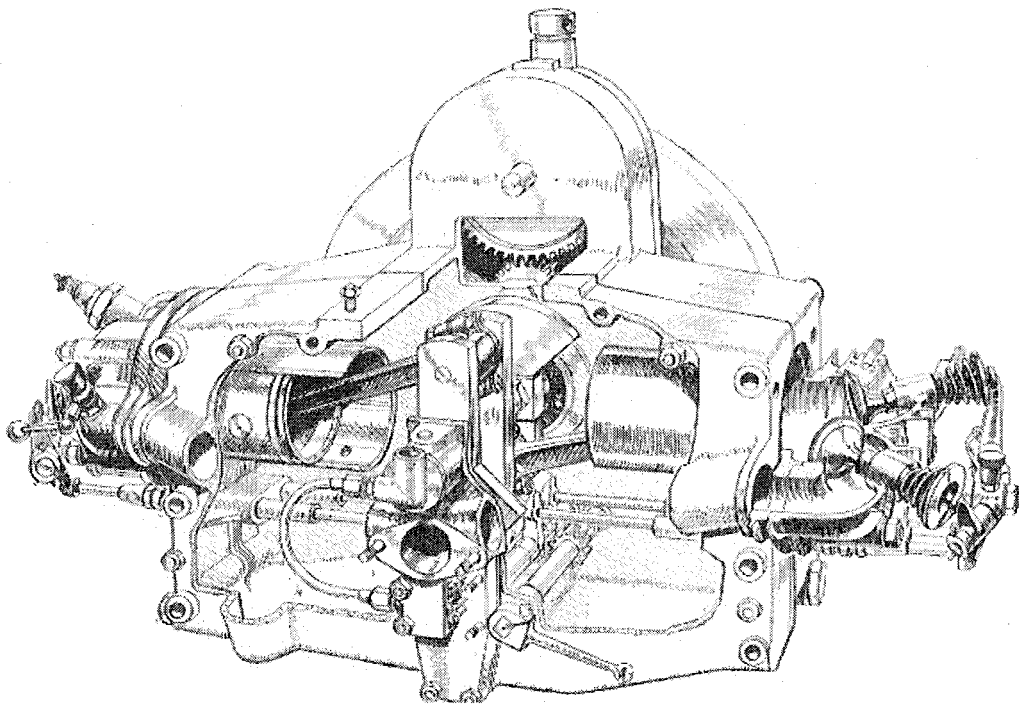
⁷⁸ Over 70 such cartoons exist in bound volumes of the journal, kept at the archives at Beamish Open Air Museum. They provide a useful insight into how motor transport was considered by satirists during this period.

⁷⁹ See Fig. 6.2.

⁸⁰ See Fig. 6.3.

further when he had pictures of exploded engines (where the components are drawn in a more advantageous position for viewing on the page,) published in the late 1930s.⁸¹ These innovations amongst many others in the genre of motoring journalism deserve to be included in the broad spectrum of design concepts that can be expressed as art.

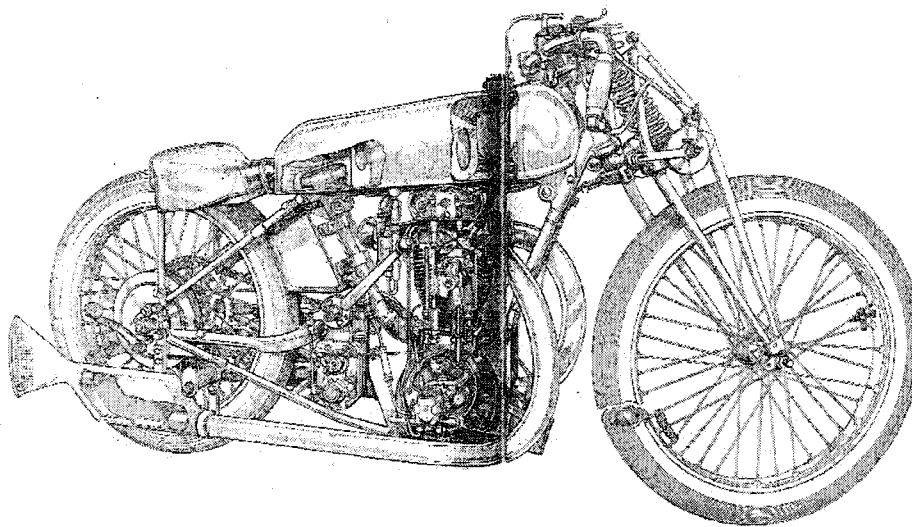
Fig. 6.2. *Sectioned view of Bradshaw engine.*



Source: *The Motor Cycle*, Mar 16th 1922. p.324.

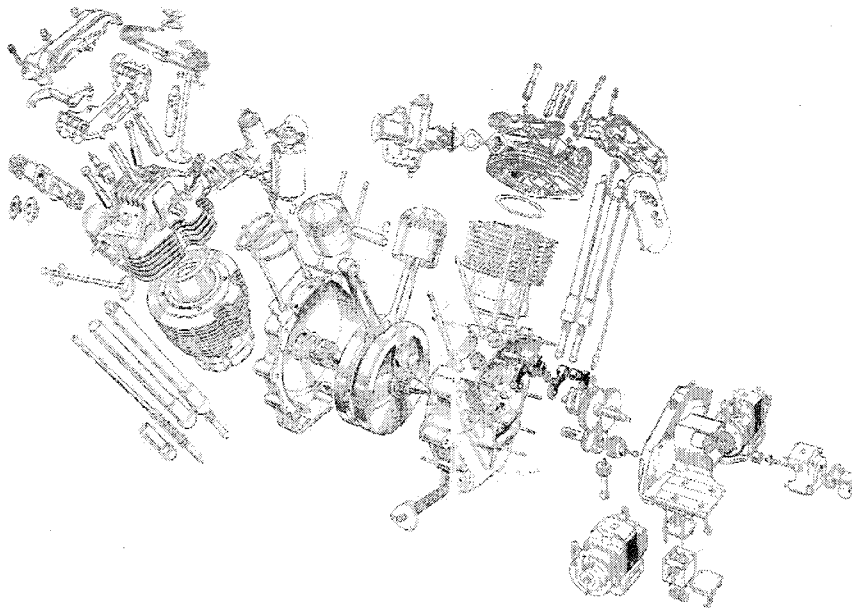
⁸¹ See Fig. 6.4.

Fig. 6.3. *Sectioned view of Grindlay Peerless.*



Source: *The Motor Cycle*, Dec 13th 1928. p.1035.

Fig. 6.4. *Exploded view of J.A.P. V. Twin engine.*



Source: Staff of *The Motor Cycle*. *Motor Cycle Engines*. (London: Iliffe, 1937).

During this period there was a school of thought, which asserted that the various strategies for motorcycle design could be associated with the development of contemporary aircraft. This can be traced, as can many positive developmental aspects of motorcycle design to

the requirements of the First World War. The similarities between the two forms of transport were also commented upon, most notably in *Ixion's* regular column in *The Motor Cycle*. Here, the writer equates the movements of riding a motorcycle, with flying an aircraft, the 'snarl of a fighting scout,' or the 'heeling and banking into corners,' being examples of this as descriptions of moving at speed along the roads.⁸² Both forms of transport were usually developed with an objective of keeping as great a power to weight ratio as possible, the aircraft because it needed to keep stable in the air and the motorcycle for means of economy, which was held at a premium, and ease of handling, for safety reasons. Motorcyclists at the time also preferred a light machine, which was easy to push in the event of an un-repairable breakdown. Because of this, both forms tended to rely upon air-cooled engines. One writer emphasised the link between the two forms in the early thirties:

'So, in his search for more power, with every means to that end furthered without a subsequent increase in weight beyond any possible limit, the aero engine designer has given our sphere many a point fully developed to a stage of proved efficiency and performance.'⁸³

Streamlining became an important design criterion for aircraft in the mid-twenties, when an all-metal fuselage came in vogue.⁸⁴ This was of less importance to motorcycle design at this time although it became so when speed records were raised to the extent that it was to be taken into consideration. The aviator and the motorcyclist had a mutual need for easily accessed, accurate measurement of engine performance, such as speedometers and oil pressure gauges, in order that safety limits could be maintained. Both rider and airman needed to maintain a high degree of physical concentration, which would be aided by ease

⁸² *The Motor Cycle*, Jan 22nd 1931 p.114. Ixion had first hand experience of both forms of transport, being a member of the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War.

⁸³ *Ibid.* p.115

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p.116

of reading of such instruments. Although these traits were of importance to the motorcar driver, the inherent qualities of the motorcar, such as having the stability of four wheels, and the enclosed nature of the vehicle, meant that driving a car was a less physically demanding pursuit. The incorporation of such instruments could influence the final design concept of the motorcycle, setting aside any aesthetic influences. A controversial figure with links to both the aircraft and motorcycle developmental fields was Sir Alliott Verdon-Roe, a pioneer airman and motorcycle enthusiast. Sir Alliott's concept of an enclosed mono-car, using a pressed-steel framework and a fuselage along aircraft lines was not given much favourable press in the conservative journals of the time. Few contemporary manufacturers with the exceptions of Coventry Eagle, Ascot-Pullin, and BMW, were willing to innovate in the field of frame design to the extent of using pressed steel. Instead the majority of motorcycle frames were constructed using brazed tubing, which had its ancestry in the bicycle. Motorcycle designs and the possibility of their being influenced by innovative design concepts such as Art Deco were hampered to some extent by this form of conservatism.

Although streamlined motorcycles did exist in a minority, streamlined motorcars especially from the United States became popular during this period and represented another example of the rift between the kinds of people who used the two forms of transport. Gartman claims that streamlining was adopted because it covered up the mechanics of the vehicle, and in some way allowed its user to forget the means by which they had acquired it. This form of styling was also a way to make an old product seem new and therefore more desirable.⁸⁵ Motorcar designers realised that the consumer was

⁸⁵ Gartman, D., *Auto Opium...* p.102. Fordist mass-production methods had eroded the working-classes sense of pride in their work. In streamlining a car, the manufacturer covered up the mechanical entity, which mirrored this sense of loss, allowing the user to perpetuate the cycle of production and consumption.

intimidated by mechanical complexity, another reason to cover it up.⁸⁶ The relative simplicity and smaller dimensions of the motorcycle meant that this was not necessary. The mechanics of the vehicle being readily accessible was often a selling point in advertising and tinkering with the vehicle was considered to be part of the pastime.

Turning to the subject of music, this artistic form was and remains an important means by which popular culture can be explored. To what extent did motorcycling influence music during this period? It is necessary to postulate the theory that music relevant to motorcycling, if it is present, will be based around the popular form, and therefore other more established classical forms of the art be attributed with less relevance for the purposes of this study. The established form of classical music is a relatively elitist genre demanding an educated ear, whereas motorcycling and some of the subjects related to it are popular with a broader spectrum of society. The assumption that motorcycling-related music is in essence for the masses, ties in with the classification of socio-cultural divisions between the high and the low, the elite and the masses.⁸⁷ It is unrealistic to suggest that tunes relating to motorcycling were of appeal only to the masses, the elite of society also having an interest in the subject. It has been claimed that the inter-war period was favoured with a common musical culture, which contrasted strongly with the absence of a common literary one.⁸⁸ Whereas there are several traceable examples of motorcycling related tunes in the popular genres, no reference to motorcycling in classical music exists. Contemporary composers were aware of the existence of the motorcycle, but it is likely that the prosaic qualities of such machines would have been unable to be linked with the poetical nature of the classical music genre.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p.126.

⁸⁷ Lowerson, J., 'An Outbreak of Allodoxia? Operatic Amateurs and Middle-Class Musical Taste Between the Wars,' p.198 in Kidd, A. & Nicholls, D., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800 – 1940*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

⁸⁸ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures...* p.390.

One social historian has claimed that, 'The dynamic of English popular music and dancing after 1918 was undoubtedly American.'⁸⁹ This was also true for other media, especially the film industry. There were two main structures involved in the promotion of popular music during this period, the first of these being the social phenomenon of the dance, and the second, the more passive pursuit of listening to the radio. Dances were social functions, and as such a popular means for the young to interact, find partners, and establish personal tastes in music. The popularity of such events with motorcycle clubs and their willingness and ability to stage them is revealed by data gathered for a previous chapter. The database compiled from the relevant section of *Motor Cycling* for the year 1932 reveals a relatively small percentage of such associations to have held such sociable events. Whereas dances were held regularly by 31 of the 385 organisations mentioned in the database, only 17 of them held dinners, presumably enhanced by the presence of musicians. These were evenly spread around the country. The relative paucity of such social events might be explained by the then current economic state of the country.⁹⁰ Motorcycles, music, dance, alcohol and the presence of the opposite sex, were some of the most essential requirements for the young to enjoy themselves. Most of these could be found at such events, if organised by motorcycle clubs. The relative scarcity of dances and dinners in this snapshot of the social activity of motorcycle clubs in one year does not necessarily mean that such functions were rare. Obviously, such events could and would be regularly occurring at other venues, run by other organisations. The functions of the dance bands at these events were twofold; to play music and promote sales of popular music.⁹¹ It has been claimed that the most powerful influence for the promotion of popular music was the radio, at that time dominated by the BBC, who from 1925 regularly played

⁸⁹ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures...* p.397.

⁹⁰ See club database in appendix 3.

⁹¹ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures...* p.401.

dance music from 10.30pm until midnight, except on Sundays.⁹² It is likely that, in the event of such forms of entertainment being organized for club members, the hire of a local hall would provide an adequate venue.

An internet search using the COPAC search engine revealed only 17 popular tunes of a motorcycling theme dating from around this period. Most of these are currently stored in the British Library and qualify for the category of novelty songs. The theme of several is based around the notion of enticing the reluctant female to come for a ride. This sheds light upon what was considered to be the accepted social attitude of coyness under such circumstances and places the machine in the position of a means toward courtship.⁹³

Others show the emancipating effect motorcycling could have on women, with titles such as *Susie and her Motor Bike* or *When You Were the Girl on the Scooter, and I was the Boy on the Bike*,⁹⁴ the latter being taken from a musical film of the period.⁹⁵ Some emphasise the freedom, speed and danger of riding with the newly introduced sport of speedway also being catered for.⁹⁶

As part of an advertising campaign held during the second part of 1917, the American manufacturer, Harley Davidson had a series of advertisements placed in *Motor Cycling* entitled, *Songs of the Road*.⁹⁷ A popular tune was linked to the various pleasures of riding,

⁹² Ibid p.402.

⁹³ See Hold, M., *Come for a Ride in my Sidecar* (London, 1913) & Carlton, H., *Come for a Scooter Motor Ride*. (Tunbridge, 1920) & Ward, W., *Come Take a Ride on My Motor Cycle*. (New York, 1913).

⁹⁴ Lawson, P., *Susie and her Motor Bike: A Catastrophe*. (London, 1911) & Revel, H., *When You Were the Girl on the Scooter and I was the Boy on the Bike*. (New York, 1933).

⁹⁵ *Broadway through a Keyhole*. (1933), directed by Lowell Sherman, and starring Russ Columbo and Constance Cummings.

⁹⁶ Scott, B., *My Speedway Hero*. (London, 1928) & Ewing, M., *Speedway Sam*. (London, 1932).

⁹⁷ *Motor Cycling*, Jul 17th 1917 to Nov 20th include a series of eight advertisements. Archival sources do not reveal if the series continued beyond this. The six titles available from the VMCC archives are: *A Perfect Day*; *There's a Long, Long Trail*; *Where Did That One Go?*; *Every Little While*; *When You Come Home Dear*, and *There's a Friend in Every Milestone*. These advertisements contain no more than one line of music, and no reference is made to composer or publisher.

emphasising the comfort and reliability of the maker's combination. Titles included, *A Perfect Day*, and *There's a Friend in Every Milestone*, as well as the more familiar, *There's a Long, Long, Trail*, give some idea of the link which was made between the machine and its ability to cover distances reliably. The lyrics of *Where did That One Go?* link the machine with speed and power. More poignantly, song number six of the series, *When You Come Home Dear*, is shown with the female pillion rider seated alone, thinking of her partner in the trenches. This contrasts with the usually illustrated motorcycle combination being ridden by the male, whilst the female sits in the sidecar.⁹⁸

Jazz and swing can be defined as the serious popular music of the inter-war period. Both were radical, and appealed to the young. They were also considered to be dangerous and immoral, by some sectors of society, as was the motorcycle.⁹⁹ Some members of society in the inter-war period had the luxury of being able to be rebellious artistically. Part of this rebelliousness found expression in an appreciation of jazz. In Britain as elsewhere this was diffused by compromises with middle-class conventions.¹⁰⁰ It has been suggested that the buying tastes of this class of society accounted for the bulk of both records and sheet music, and that they were of an older age group than the modern music-buying public.¹⁰¹ This generation was placed in the position, culturally speaking of facing two ways, looking back to the moral values of the Victorian period, whilst being influenced by modern ideas of a more liberal nature.¹⁰² Motorcycling introduced a liberating element into the life of the rider, and it is possible that an appreciation of the more radical forms of popular music went hand in hand with this. If this is true, there is a little evidence to

⁹⁸ *Motor Cycling* Oct 23rd 1917.

⁹⁹ Denisoff, R. S. & Peterson, R. A., (eds.), *The Sounds of Social Change: Studies in Popular Culture*. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972). p.27.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid* p.182.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*. p.183.

¹⁰² *Ibid* p.184.

support the assumption. One of the interviewees, who was himself a keen motorcyclist and jazz musician during the era, had no personal recollection of any motorcycling related tunes in any musical form although it was admitted that time might have wiped them from his memory.¹⁰³ Motorcycling tunes did not appear to have been popular in either the jazz or swing types of music, being found instead in relatively small numbers in the category of novelty tunes. There is usually an exception and this is found in a tune from a slightly later period, entitled, *Poppity Pop, Motor Cycle*, a nonsensical jazz tune by Slim Gaillard.¹⁰⁴ Here, Gaillard along with Charlie Parker and Dizzie Gillespie, make a half serious attempt to convert the sound of a motorcycle into a jazz form.

A contemporary commentator claimed that jazz music was the product of a restless age and that the Great War had left a generation too disturbed after their struggle to be content with a tranquil existence.¹⁰⁵ This phenomenon can be equated with the need for the same generation to enlist the aid of the internal combustion engine in order that these frustrations and fears were to some extent alleviated by the excitement of riding and driving. Pleasure is the general objective after years of fear and pain.¹⁰⁶ These needs can also be equated with the adolescent's rites of passage, and the acts of rebellion from authority usually associated with the teenager. The rise of the teenager as a cultural phenomenon has generally been claimed to occur during the 1950s and Sixties, but recent research has revealed that some forms of teenage sub-culture existed during the interwar period in urbanised areas, when affluent working class people of this age group were left with sufficient excess earnings to afford commodities such as motorcycles, and enjoy a

¹⁰³ Respondent 3: born Leeds 1916.

¹⁰⁴ Gaillard, S., *Poppity Pop Motor Cycle*. (Los Angeles, 1945).

¹⁰⁵ Mendl, R. W. S., *The Appeal of Jazz*. (London: Philip Allan & Co., 1927) p.186.

¹⁰⁶ *Index of The Motor Cycle, Motor Cycle Cavalcade*. (London: Illiffe & Sons, 1950). p.95.

relatively independent lifestyle.¹⁰⁷ Fowler's research on interwar teenagers provides and in-depth analysis into the leisure habits of young adults during this period, and the general conclusions drawn from the research reinforce Rowntree's earlier work regarding this section of society.¹⁰⁸ Such people, new to the experience of wage-earning, and without the financial responsibilities of parenthood, could indulge in relatively extravagant pastimes such as Jazz or motorcycles. Rowntree claimed that in York in 1936, '... hundreds of young men have motor-bicycles.'¹⁰⁹ Work done on the experience of Coventry, shown this city to have had a large proportion of its population derived from this age group. Considering its importance as a motorcycle-producing city, the likelihood of many of them being motorcycle owners is strong.¹¹⁰ *Ixion* hinted at this form of nascent independence and its relationship to motorcycling, much earlier. Here, the young person, having acquired a job, exchanges one set of restrictions, parental ones, for those of the workplace. They are alleviated both by Jazz and other forms of music and the motorcycle, which, '... wafts us swiftly into a world of liberty where, for a few delicious hours each week-end, nobody can push us around.'¹¹¹ Actual historical data regarding teenage motorcyclists has been difficult to acquire in bulk. None has been obtained regarding their taste in music. To alleviate this, the interviewees offered a small insight into the phenomenon. Further clues as to the presence of young motorcyclists were found in the magistrate's records analysed in a previous chapter, where the likelihood of committing a motorcycling offence increased radically between the ages of 14 and 29 years old. Links

¹⁰⁷ See Fowler, D., *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Interwar Britain*. (London: Woburn Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* Chapter 4, pp. 93 – 115.

¹⁰⁹ Rowntree, B. S., *Poverty & Progress: A Second Social Survey of York*. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1941). p.371. The passage claims that motorcycling could be an alternative and more worthwhile pursuit than drinking alcohol and hints that the subjects of this part of the survey were working class, due to the alternative pursuits such as spending a 'few coppers at the cinema' or bicycling. These pursuits were of course not restricted to this sector of the population.

¹¹⁰ Lancaster, B. & Mason, T., *Life & Labour in a 20th Century City: The Experience of Coventry*. (Coventry: Cryfield Press, 1986). p.63. Coventry had at least four ACU affiliated motor clubs at this time. The Coventry Post Office; Ace; Berkswell and District, and Coventry Magnet. (See club database).

¹¹¹ *Ixion of The Motor Cycle, Motorcycle Cavalcade*. p.121.

between such rebelliousness and a liking for radical music are explored in Hebdige.¹¹² The question remains as to why enthusiasm for motorcycles was not a noticeably important element within Jazz music and other radical forms, given the youthfully stylish nature of the pursuit? One tenuous reason for this lies in its origins in the United States of America, which was a land by this time dominated by the motorcar.

Despite its associations with some musical forms, there is no evidence to suggest that motorcycling in any way influenced the classical music of the time, the institutions representing this form appearing to disapprove of 'freak music', of any type.¹¹³ Serious classical music appealed to and took its audience mainly from some of the educated middle-classes, whose psychology might involve a fear of progress epitomised by motorised transport.¹¹⁴ There was a fear amongst certain organisations that the status and condition of amateur music was in part affected by the public's increased mobility and diversification of interests. 'The attractions of the open air, the light car, (or presumably motorcycle) and the cinema, all consume time given to the practice of music.'¹¹⁵ The image of the family gathered around the piano, performing the latest popular tune, dates from a previous age. The ability to travel more widely, which occurred when motorised transport became cheaper, was one element, which caused the decline of this practice.

Motorcycling music of all types from the inter-war years if it existed in any great degree has been almost completely forgotten, both by historians and the modern motorcyclist.

¹¹² Hebdige, D., *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1979). Although concentrating upon post-war subcultures, this work is relevant for the interwar period, if it is accepted that they existed in some form during this period.

¹¹³ Mackerness, E. D., *A Social History of English Music*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964). p.248. At a conference of the Incorporated Society of Musicians in 1922, Sir Hugh Allen protested that, 'Freak music is becoming more and more aggressive owing to commercialism and the desire for notoriety, and pleasure is being taken too easily in noises and barbaric rhythms.'

¹¹⁴ See Forster, E. M., *Howards End*. (1910; London: 1989). p.36 '...the throbbing, stinking car.' and p.44 the chapter concerning the Beethoven concert.

¹¹⁵ Mackerness, E. D., *A Social History...* p.258.

One piece of music from the period has remained in the canon of motorcycling related anthems, mainly because of its links to a perennially popular film, and the continuing popularity of the artist who performed it. George Formby's film, *No Limit*, was a platform for his work, and an indulgent opportunity for him to engage in his passion for riding.¹¹⁶ In shooting the film, Formby is reputed to have done all his own stunts, the final racing scene being of particular relevance in that it shows the determination of the man to be authentic.¹¹⁷ *Riding in the TT Races*, the most enduringly familiar of the film's songs, is composed in Formby's usual amusing style with lyrics both relevant to as well as satirical of motorcycling.¹¹⁸ Formby was a keen motorcyclist, his fame and wealth allowing him to own a fleet of motorcycles, of which Norton machines were reputedly his favourites. Although Formby is not known to have ever raced motorcycles himself, this preference for Nortons reveals the influence of racing machines upon him. Norton during this time were a relatively small manufacturing company compared to Triumph or the giant BSA empire, and they relied upon continuing racing successes to keep them popular. Prior to the introduction after the Second World War of twin cylinder machines for general consumption, in order that they might keep up with general trends, they continued to produce a selection of rather outdated single cylinder machines, mainly based upon old racing machines, for public consumption. Their main concern during the inter-war period was in the continuing development of their Manx and International racing machines.¹¹⁹ With the onset of the Second World War, and prior to his embarking upon tours to

¹¹⁶ *No Limit* (1936) Producer: Basil Dean, Director: Monty Banks, Songs include: *Riding In The T.T. Races* (Gifford/Cliffe); *Riding Around On A Rainbow* (with Florence Desmond) (Formby/Cliffe); *In A Little Wigan Garden* (Gifford/Cliffe); *Your Way Is My Way* (with Florence Desmond) (Parr-Davies)

¹¹⁷ <http://www.georgeformby.co.uk/> (Accessed 19 April 2007). The hero of the film runs out of petrol and pushes his machine the last 500 yards. This scene, performed by Formby, took several shots to complete, the final of which left him so exhausted that he needed a doctor's aid on the finish line.

¹¹⁸ See appendix 9.

¹¹⁹ Hopwood, B., *Whatever Happened to the British Motorcycle Industry?* (Yeovil: Haynes Publishing, 1981). p.71. Norton had for many years devoted 90% of their design engineering activity to racing and only 10% to production.

entertain the troops, Formby continued to indulge in motorcycling, by other means, in that he was a despatch rider for the Blackpool Home Guard.¹²⁰

What place did motorcycling as one of the most familiar forms of transport have in one of the most popular forms of entertainment of the period, the cinema? From their role as a platform for slapstick in Keystone Cop movies, to a more artistically revolutionary part in Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera*, the motorcycle represented motive power and freedom, in an age when cinematic techniques were becoming increasingly elaborate. An article held in Media Resources Centre in the library of the University of California at Berkeley states that:

'The daredevil spirit of the 1920's ... infected early comedy films as a reckless combination of plane, train, streetcar, motorcycle, horse and automobile chases presented side-splitting, breathtaking, white-knuckle art forms that even today are without parallel.'¹²¹

It is likely that although the motorcycle was physically the smallest mode of transport mentioned in the quotation, and therefore likely to be less imposing upon the senses to the cinema audience, the sheer accessibility of this form of transport was more likely to lead to the audience identifying and being sympathetic towards the rider, at least in British audiences.

The motorcycle industry engaged upon a debate as to the viability of using film as positive propaganda. Articles relating to this are stored at the Modern Records Centre at Warwick University. The minute books of the British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturer's Trader's Union show an altering attitude towards the usefulness of film as a means of

¹²⁰ <http://www.georgeformby.co.uk/> (Accessed 19 April 2007).

¹²¹ <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/> (Accessed 19 April 2007).

positively promoting the sport, which changed from definite dubiousness to an agreement as to its viability.¹²² This was despite the popularity of *The Motor Cycle* film being noted for its success at Olympia at the end of the previous decade, which it was accepted, warranted the donation of £56 for a negative to be produced for distribution in Australia and New Zealand.¹²³ By the early 1930s, the medium seemed less popular with them. In another minute from a meeting from March 14th 1930 it was generally agreed that the character and cost of these films made no particular appeal to the BCMCMTU at present.¹²⁴ Whether this apparent dislike of progressive media represents some kind of a backward facing attitude and whether such things were met with a more positive approach in other countries such as the USA is unclear. By 1933 the attitude of the Union remained uncertain regarding the effectiveness of film to publicise the industry. In a meeting of March 7th 1933 the Director submitted a letter to his associates, from Civic and Industrial Films Ltd. requesting Union assistance in the creation of an 'interest' film complete with 'running, talking commentary.' Several members still considered that film publicity was not effective in the cycle and motorcycle industry.¹²⁵ The forces that alter opinions and tastes were at work within those in control of the industry. A year later, the Union finally changed its attitude towards 'film propaganda.' A minute dated March 9th 1934 shows that the director reported he had been approached on a number of occasions by companies interested in the production of industrial films and requested the benefit of members' advice and experience as to the applicability of such a film to propagandise the cycle and motorcycle industry.¹²⁶ After detailed discussion, members generally expressed the opinion that, subject to a: the preparation of a suitable scenario, and b: arrangements were to be made to ensure the display of the films at a sufficiently large number of cinemas for

¹²² University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre. MSS 204/1/1/7.

¹²³ Ibid p.1016.

¹²⁴ MSS 204/1/1/8 p.1396.

¹²⁵ MSS 204/1/1/10 p.1719.

¹²⁶ MSS 204/1/1/11 p.1830.

an adequate period, - propaganda by film might be advantageous.¹²⁷ In the same meeting and incidental to this, members also referred to the possibility of securing radio publicity through one or other of the French stations upon Sundays. Positive propaganda through similar means throughout the Empire was also discussed.¹²⁸ Later that same year, it was agreed in another meeting that a Mr. Baynes of Publicity Films Ltd. was to make a film for the 1934 Olympia show provided the cost did not exceed £300.¹²⁹

The above debate might be considered unusual, as well as needless, considering the success of *The Motor Cycle* film which was first shown at the Olympia show in 1927, and was to be shown at many established motorcycle clubs subsequently. It was to be re-issued on a yearly basis for several years. Here, the management of *The Motor Cycle* in collaboration with their sister journal from the world of four wheels, *The Autocar* produced a 45 minute film, on 3 reels devoted to aspects of the pastime as diverse as the T.T. where it was claimed to have been proved that, 'British motorcycles are the fastest and most reliable in the world.' Also included was dirt track, trials, continental races, and a touring section, designed to emphasise how easily a motorcycle and sidecar could be the link with other forms of sport and pleasure. There was also a scene depicting a channel crossing by a motorcycle on floats. Women of the London Ladies M.C.C. were seen taking part in trials, and children on miniature machines raced on a mini cinder track. These scenes provided a great deal of positive motorcycling propaganda. The T.T. races and speedway provided the motorcycling population with heroes and were glamorous means towards promoting the sport even amongst non-riders. The film appears to have been seen as less than influential in the industry's debate. This leads to the conclusion that links between the industry and the motorcycling press were not as strong as they could

¹²⁷ MSS 204/1/1/11. p.1830.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p.1960.

have been. Subsequently the films were given airing in the occasional laudatory article in a contemporary journal, and during the course of the intervening years have come to reside, as rarities in archives.¹³⁰

That cinema was an efficient medium for promoting motorcycling or anything else is undeniable. During this period the cinema was the most important medium of popular culture with a strong rival for the title being the wireless.¹³¹ The English market made up one-tenth of the world's demand for film, 'going to the pictures' being more important to them than any other nation.¹³² This was particularly true for the nineteen thirties, when there were 18 – 19 million weekly attendances.¹³³ This, coinciding with the popularity of the British motorcycle at this time, further emphasises the importance film could have had in promoting the pastime. It has been claimed that during this period, adolescent boys, were the most likely to be filling cinema seats.¹³⁴ They were probably the most likely to be influenced by any motorcycling film, which was shown¹³⁵. To temper this argument, adult women were more likely to attend the cinema than men.¹³⁶ Any analysis of the positive effects of motorcycles on film had upon both the industry and the pastime must take into account that whilst adolescent boys might enthuse on the subject and up to 1930, be legally entitled to ride them on the roads from the age of 14, they might not have the finances to pursue it, and whilst adult women did take part in motorcycling, the majority of adult motorcyclists were men, whereas they did not attend the cinema as often as

¹³⁰ *The Motor Cycle* Dec 5th 1929 p.901 or Nov 9th 1933 p.596.

¹³¹ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures...* p.419.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid* p. 421.

¹³⁵ Fowler, D., *The First Teenagers:...* p.102. *The Motor Cycle Book for Boys* commenced publication in 1927, illustrating the popularity of the subject with this sector of society.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

women. Men, the most viable target for motorcycling propaganda, were slightly less avid cinemagoers.¹³⁷

Cinema attendance has been described as a means by which the viewer could 'vicariously participate in the pleasures of automobiling.'¹³⁸ In this instance, Gartman discussed the role played by the cinema in propagating a desire for motorcar ownership, within the American working classes. In the case of motorcycles in Britain, the medium represents less of a means towards vicarious participation, although this would have been relevant, and more of a means by which the working class would have been able to identify with the ownership and use of such vehicles. This statement is also true of the representation of the motorcycle in literature.

Another side to the phenomenon lay in the existence of budding starlets of the motion picture scene, which were to be found in articles in the motorcycling press during this period. The full extent to which young female cinema actresses were attracted to the motorcycle and their reasons for this is not known, but several were. They were included as a means of positively promoting motorcycling to young females, who were searching for role models on the silver screen. They also appealed to the male audience. That they appeared at all emphasises the way that the motorcycle was seen as a means of transport. It is unlikely that women would have been used if they were to be associated with anything unsavoury, as reputation and propriety were to be considered. Despite this, it is possible that some actresses were eager to promote themselves as being 'racy.' Miss Easter Walters, a cinema actress for the Astra-Pathe company, in the years after the First World War was pictured in *Motor Cycling* when it was announced that a series of 'dare-

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Gartman, D., *Auto Opium...* p.36.

devil motorcycle feats' was soon to be released on film.¹³⁹ What these were and if they came up to expectations is unknown, as archival evidence is unavailable. A motorcycling actress of the period, whose career was less obscure, lasting several decades, was Molly Terraine, who was featured in a 1919 copy of the same journal.¹⁴⁰ After being involved in acting roles the actress later took part in productions, most notably as acting coach to Jean Simmons in the 1948 production of *Hamlet*.¹⁴¹ The above links with motorcycling are sometimes strong, and sometimes tenuous. That they had a link with motorcycling usually had no subsequent relevance with their careers. They are an often occurring but ephemeral phenomenon. Names and faces appear in the journals, and often never re-appear, the motorcycling careers of the personalities, if they had them, are lost to history.

The Vintage Motor Cycle Club's archives contain a large quantity of videoed film copies including a selection of film dating from the period in question. Although some of the film footage is not in good condition, it has been rescued as well as possible. Consequently some of the details normally required for citations are not available. The films encompass several main themes. These range from those concentrating upon the industrial processes involved in producing a motorcycle; the various sporting aspects of the pastime, from grand prix racing, to trials and dirt track races; to an exploration of club social activities, and how the private individual's life can be enhanced by motorcycling. At the traditional comedy orientated part of the spectrum, some footage of Mack Sennett's Keystone Cops antics can be viewed. Both silent films complete with titles and sometimes with the addition of music intended to portray the excitement of the scene and more modern clips

¹³⁹ *Motor Cycling*, May 6th 1919 p.583.

¹⁴⁰ *Motor Cycling*, Sept 10th 1919 p.493.

¹⁴¹ <http://www.geocities.com/clannad47/biography.htm> (Accessed 19 April 2007). Molly Terraine starred in *The Firm of Girdlestone*, Dir. Harold M. Shaw (1915) as Rebecca; *The Toilers* Dir. Tom Watts (1919); was on the production team of Will Hay's *Where There's a Will* (1936) and was dialogue director in *Blood Orange* Dir. Terrence Fisher (1953), acting in *Twice Upon a Time* Dir. Emeric Pressburger in the same year.

with running commentaries exist. The former type is particularly relevant in the case of the Keystone Cop clips.¹⁴² Two short films, *Modern Centaur* and *Freedom's Wheel*, were both made for *The Motor Cycle* magazine as a means of promoting the movement. Their purpose is made clear in the introduction to the first:

'Riders of the steel steeds of this generation: A unique review of motorcycle sports and pastimes on road and track.'¹⁴³

The reference to classical imagery of the title of the first is linked with the opening scene, which appears in both films, where clever camera work makes art deco style outlandish paintings of machines and riders appear to rush across the screen. The first film shows many aspects of the movement, with the addition of showing the usefulness of the motorcycle in delivering mail, motorcycle football, complete with a three feet diameter ball, and an unusual Hungarian ceremony that took place in Budapest where a mass of machines and riders were blessed. *Freedom's Wheel* shows the procedures in club activities such as gymkhana. A scene, which gives an insight into the assumption of propriety prevalent at the time, shows a couple indulging in a camping trip. It is stressed several times in the commentary that the couple are definitely married. There is also an emphasis in the commentary on the motorcycle being a means to explore the countryside, and not a means to desecrate it. This is a reaction to the anti-motoring lobby, which existed at the time, evidence of which can be found in literature such as *Britain and the Beast*.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² For example *Hit the Road Jack* Dir. Mack Sennett. Signet Films, unknown date, involves a cowboy on a motorcycle being chased by the police, whilst in another scene a sidecar outfit chases round the rooms of a large house, to the accompaniment of piano music and engine noises.

¹⁴³ *Modern Centaur*, made in 1933, *Freedom's Wheel* made in 1935 were both produced by G.B. Equipments Ltd. Other citation details unavailable.

¹⁴⁴ Williams-Ellis, C., (ed.), *Britain and the Beast*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1937).

The cinema was used as a way of promoting the relatively new motorcycling sport of speedway. The Vintage Club archive holds two examples of this dating from the mid-thirties, *Hot Cinders*, and *Flying Cinders*.¹⁴⁵ Both these films portray the sport in semi-classicised terms. In the first of these films, the riders are considered to be modern gladiators, whilst the second likens the sport to the ancient Roman event of chariot racing. It was fashionable to relate sporting activities on the cinema screen in such terms.

Film footage, which has survived regarding sporting events such as trials, and to a lesser extent motorcycle racing, is of interest in that the film camera is placed in the role of a static spectator. In the case of trials, spectators often had to walk or ride to a relatively inaccessible position across rough country to arrive in a position whereby a particular 'section'¹⁴⁶ of the trial was located. Clips of various trials exist at the Vintage Club archive. Companies such as Pathe Gazette regularly filmed events such as this during this period for showing in news programmes. The Scott Trial in Yorkshire was shown in cinemas in such a way. One of the most striking aspects of these films is their repetition. Each rider was filmed covering a particularly difficult section over a river or up a hill. This occurred many times as there were often many competitors. The camera becomes the spectator, and the audience judges each rider's performance, just as the spectator would whilst standing on a remote part of the moors, or by the banks of a muddy stream.

Another form of motorcycling related film, which has survived is the documentary form, whereby a particular make of machine is concentrated upon. The manufacturing processes involved in producing the machine are covered for the edification of the audience. These

¹⁴⁵ *Hot Cinders*. Dir: Lionel Van Praag. Prod: Craig Baynes. 1930s and *Flying Cinders*. Prods: Thelma Svensson & C. Pattinson-Knight. Commentary: Kent Stephenson. 1930s.

¹⁴⁶ A section of a trial was an observed part, usually considered to be difficult to ride over, because of obstacles, such as rivers or hills. Marks were lost for needing assistance or putting feet down for support.

films were a means of advertising the qualities of the particular make of machine as well as positively promoting the superior nature of the British product.¹⁴⁷ *How a Motorcycle is Made*, filmed just before the First World War, concentrated upon Rover motorcycles, emphasising the fact that these machines were totally manufactured 'in house' from the casting of the cylinders to the painting of the petrol tank.¹⁴⁸ Another, filmed in the mid-twenties, *How a Famous British Motorcycle is Made*, is almost identical in its approach and concentrates upon the production processes involved in making a Rudge machine.¹⁴⁹ Notable in the latter title is the presence of patriotism, a result of the recent war. The amount of interest in the motorcycling industry generated by such films and the effect they had on popularising the motorcycle and strengthening belief in the superiority of the British product is not known, although the use of this medium shows that it was thought to be worthwhile.

Such films were of a different although related genre to that of the work of John Grierson and other members of the Documentary Film Movement, which had its heyday during this period, in that they attempted to portray a realistic vision of what occurred in the process of manufacture. Whereas those financing them usually dictated the quality and content of films, and the artist's freedom was subsequently restricted by such elements, to the extent that it was likely to be dominated by the economically dominant group within society,¹⁵⁰ these films were produced and probably financed for and by the motorcycle industry. They therefore bypassed this dominant film-financing group, who may or may not have approved of the positive motorcycling propaganda they provided. In this way such films

¹⁴⁷ Did they also fit into a niche whereby a fascination for observing industrial processes by a population still easily impressed by them was filled?

¹⁴⁸ *How a Motorcycle is Made*. (1913). Rover motorcycles. This contrasts with the practice of using parts such as forks, engines, and seats from other sources, which was often the case.

¹⁴⁹ *How a Famous British Motorcycle is Made*. (1926). Rudge motorcycles.

¹⁵⁰ Miles, P. & Smith, M., *Cinema, Literature & Society*...p.182.

could be regarded as revolutionary in the same way as Grierson's in that they broke the vicious circle of economics, which 'did so much to shape film as a cultural form.'¹⁵¹ Such films differ from the work of the Documentary Film Movement in that they were to be seen by a far greater, more diverse audience. Whereas *How a British Motor Cycle is Made* and the *Motor Cycling* film were generally distributed, only a few of Grierson's and his groups, such as *Night Mail*,¹⁵² were shown commercially, their audience being 'film buffs' and the habitués of film clubs who were interested in film for its artistic qualities.¹⁵³ Grierson believed in the concept of the 'creative treatment of actuality,'¹⁵⁴ and that the genre of the documentary film had the ability to bring ordinary people, within the range of the camera, and to show the spontaneity of their actions in as near a natural way as possible.¹⁵⁵ Film was a means of dignifying the common man. Some of the films produced in conjunction with the motorcycle industry and its journalistic arm, fit into these ideals. This is particularly true where the social aspect of the motorcycle has been covered. *The Modern Centaur*, with its camping scene, or *The Vintage Era*,¹⁵⁶ introduced as 'A record of motor cycling & motoring achievement. Prepared by *The Motor Cycle*, *The Autocar* and *The Yachting World*' with its wide selection of activities, show that the pursuit of motorcycling instilled excitement into the lives of ordinary people. This statement must be qualified by the presence, which also occurred in the films of Grierson of the middle-class accented narrator. Where a sound commentary is included, the accent of the narrator illustrates the class to which they belong. The extent to which this influenced the audience, in their perceptions of the social class of the rider, is not known, although the importance of creating an impression of respectability when describing motorcycling cannot be

¹⁵¹ Miles, P. & Smith, M., *Cinema, Literature & Society*... p.183.

¹⁵² *Night Mail*. (1936). Dir: H. Watt.

¹⁵³ Miles, P. & Smith, M., *Cinema, Literature & Society*... p.184.

¹⁵⁴ Ford, B., (ed.), *Early Twentieth Century Britain*... p.249.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ *The Vintage Era*. Volume 92 of VMCC Video Library.

sufficiently stressed, as it was the middle-classes who were most likely to own motorcycles.

Any analysis of the popularity of such films, and their availability to be viewed must take into account a comment made by one interviewee who considered the film of the Isle of Man TT to be a special yearly treat. To view it a journey to Sunderland Empire theatre had to be made from Barnard Castle, a round trip of nearly 80 miles. The film was not shown locally, '... only in city locations.'¹⁵⁷ That an important industry should have trouble convincing the distributors that its film would be lucrative and worthwhile for a more complete national viewing may appear strange considering the fame and importance of the event and how it was a means towards positively promoting British sporting excellence. That a special effort had to be made to view such films may be considered unusual with the plethora of cinemas in operation during this period. When juxtaposed with Hollywood gangster movies and musicals, motorcycling films appear to appeal to a relative minority. Rowntree and Lavers post Second World War survey of the social life of Britain revealed previous to the conflict there were approximately 5000 cinemas with five million seats.¹⁵⁸ Each cinema manager would be eager to fill those seats; by showing what they thought would be most popular. An example of this lies in the cliché of love conquering all which features strongly in one particular film with a motorcycling theme. In *Money for Speed* made in 1933, the clean cut, fair-playing speedway rider, comes up against commercialism and money-grabbing, gradually succumbing to alcohol. The hero re-asserts himself by completing a dangerous wall of death stunt, to win the love of the heroine.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Respondent 4: born Woodland 1910.

¹⁵⁸ Rowntree, S. and Lavers, G. R., *English Life and Leisure: A Social Study*. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1951). p.228.

¹⁵⁹ *Money for Speed*, (1933). Dir. B. Vohaus.

In conclusion, the motorcycle and the pursuit of motorcycling had very little influence on the above artistic forms. Although the motorcycle did lend itself to creativity in the realms of literature, film, art, and music, and was used by all these forms, there was no revolutionary form of art derived from this form of transport. Conversely, all these forms influenced motorcycling and the motorcycle to some extent. The motorcyclist could read about his pastime, and view sport or more outlandish film footage. Some music was written about motorcycling, but its rarity did not qualify it as a separate musical form. Certain modern artistic styles were influential in motorcycle design, although their influence was not strong, due mainly to the motorcycle being primarily a utilitarian device, where form did not override function, and the conservative nature of the riders did not allow for too much innovative design. All the above forms of media encouraged the use of the motorcycle as being 'stylish' and fashionable, and therefore appealed to those sectors of society so inclined. This can be seen for example, in any of the included advertising illustrations. The mass media was responsible for providing examples of how motorcycling could be undertaken acceptably within society. The diverse social groups, which composed the motorcycling population were overall, aided by the media, which was responsible for, '...providing the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality of all these separate and fragmented pieces can be coherently grasped.'¹⁶⁰ There was an overall positive approach to the subject by the media, giving a general emphasis on its acceptability both as a means of transport and as an intrinsic part of contemporary life.

¹⁶⁰ Hall, S., cited in Hebdige, D., *Subculture*,... p.85.

Conclusion.

The social and cultural importance of personal motorised transport and especially the motorcycle has, until relatively recently been overlooked and in most cases ignored in the general literature of the interwar period. Despite offering a partial remedy to this, Sean O'Connell's work on motorcar ownership, Thoms, Holden & Claydon's work on the car in relation to popular culture and Peter Thorold's book on the motoring age, all pay scant regard to the two-wheeler.¹ In order that a study of the topic can be made, motorcycling has been located in a broad context rather than a purely economic narrative. To provide an alternative view to a subject overly biased towards business and to a lesser extent sport history, the motorcycling phenomenon has been placed in the broader context of interwar society with its often-paradoxical social and economical developments, such as great poverty in a land, which for some provided a previously unheard of economic wealth.

Academic research is rare into how the whole pace of British life altered as a result of motor vehicles, which unlike the train, which was forced to follow a fixed route, as well as impose a certain amount of gregariousness, were able to take the user almost anywhere, at a pace and with the company they chose. Turning to contemporary literature finds evidence for the increased degree in which the population took to exploring the British countryside as a leisure pursuit and how it was criticised.² For many, the first contact with personal motorised transport was a motorcycle and it was upon such vehicles that the first

¹ O'Connell, S., *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896 – 1939*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Thoms, D., Holden, L. & Claydon, T., *The Motor Car & Popular Culture in the 20th Century*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998); Thorold, P., *The Motoring Age: The Automobile and Britain, 1896 – 1939*. (London: Profile Books, 2003). Although the second of these includes a notable chapter on the motorcycle by Steve Koerner, this to emphasises economic factors involved between the two forms of transport, rather than cultural aspects.

² See Priestley, J. B., *English Journey*. (London: Heinemann, 1936); Morton, H. V., *In Search of England*. (London: Methuen, 1931) and Williams-Ellis, C., (ed.) *Britain and the Beast*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1937).

trips into the countryside were undertaken, as is confirmed by the responses of some interviewees. It is hoped that this present work has revealed the extent to which many aspects of British life were forced to speed up as a result of this phenomenon.³ Put concisely, the pace of the horse was replaced with that of the mechanized wheel. Despite this, motorcycling during this period can be argued as an integral part of an, 'age of innocence,' as regards transport technology, with the comparatively basic, uncomplicated machinery and poor road systems, many of which were un-metalled with a resulting dust-problem, being compensated for by the sense of adventure felt by the riders in what was basically a country with many backwaters as yet unexplored by the urban population.

This study has shown the range and diversity of social and cultural influences, such as clubs or music, film and literature, which enhanced the interwar motorcycling experience, showing the significance of this form of transport in cultural and consumption terms. It has reflected national trends, through a comparative analysis between documentary evidence and interviews from the North East and nationally available journals and archival sources to provide a picture of British motorcycling during this period. The relative cheapness and general availability of motorcycles allowed them to be used by a wide range of the population for a great variety of purposes. From being in its most basic form a 'ride to work' utilitarian device, or family transport, or a business vehicle more reliable and cheaper than a horse and cart, or an aesthetically pleasing, successful sporting machine, to a tool by which the intrepid traveller undertook often well-documented tours, motorcycle use opened up new horizons for many. During this period the British motorcycle industry also held the dominant position in the world, both as manufacturers and in sporting competitions. Dozens of manufacturers produced a huge selection of

³ Examples of this lie in the use of sidecar machines in small businesses, the use of powered tricycles in light goods delivery on railways, or postal deliveries in rural areas and commuting to and from work.

models although this post First World War boom was rationalised by the 1930s.⁴ There was also a thriving industry producing accessories, tyres, oils, and other accoutrements and necessities.⁵

Associational life based around the motorcycle has been shown in chapter two to be thriving and diverse during this period, both in the North East region and nationally with clubs catering for all types of rider from the tourist to the sporting trials rider.

Comparisons can be found between these forms of clubs and the American hot-rod enthusiasm explored by Moorehouse although this study involves a later period.⁶

Howkins, Lowerson, and Beaven, and others have explored other forms of associational life,⁷ this study provides a valuable addition to their work. The complex set of interactions between motorcycle clubs and other motoring organisations, the industry and the legislative processes involved in the control of the growing phenomenon of personal motorised transport, have been revealed to be far from straightforward in chapter four as illustrated in the localised study of Durham magistrates records regarding the implementation of traffic law. The sometimes-piecemeal governmental interventions encompassed in the main Acts of Parliament were often less than well-advised, due in general to a lack of co-operation between these three sectors as well as a lack of understanding regarding the nature of the motorist and the lack of a 'rational theory of

⁴ Koerner, S., 'Four wheels good, two wheels bad: the motor cycle versus the light motor car – 1919 –39.' D.Thoms, L.Holden & T.Claydon, *The Motor Car & Popular Culture in the 20th Century*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998. p.152.

⁵ Although figures are patchy regarding this form of employment, *Engineering* journal Jan 24th 1930, p.114, provided some insight stating that for four unspecified areas of high employment, between 6500 and 8500 were thus employed throughout the 1920s

⁶ Moorhouse, H. F., *Driving Ambitions: An Analysis of American Hotrod Enthusiasm*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991).

⁷ Howkins, A. & Lowerson, J., *Trends in Leisure, 1919 – 1939*. (University of Sussex: University of Sussex Press, 1979); Lowerson, J., *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1870 – 1914*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); Beaven, B., *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain, 1850 – 1945*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

accidents.’⁸ This in turn sowed the seeds for the politicisation of elements within the motorcycling and other transport sector movements, resulting ultimately in the various riders-rights organizations presently in existence in the case of for example the British Motor Cycle Association.

Women’s involvement in motorcycling during this period has been shown to be a narrowly definable one, dictated by class, economic independence, marital status, and age. Female riders were very much in a minority and although they appear to have been given every encouragement in the enthusiasts press and in some circumstances, achieved sporting successes and fame as intrepid tourists, the motorcycling movement was during this period overwhelmingly a masculine one. The historiography broadly pertaining to this comes under the categories of interwar gender studies and the history of sport. Some of the main academics concerned with this are Hargreaves, who concentrates on women’s sport, Lowerson and Mason, who provide a more general history of sport in Britain, and McCrone, who shows how women could be emancipated through sport.⁹ These writers all suggest that, for many women during this period, involvement in sport was qualified by home responsibilities. The conclusion to be drawn from the evidence of this thesis, both through various journal articles and interviews is that the women involved in motorcycling were notably independent and adventurous in nature. They attempted and often achieved the state of competing on equal terms with men in sporting activities. In effect, this promoted not only the machines they rode but also their gender as being no hindrance to sporting excellence as some contemporary males assumed. Some modern day female

⁸ Foreman-Peck, J., ‘Death on the Roads: Changing Responses to Motor Accidents’ in Barker, T., (ed.), *The Economic and Social Effects of the Spread of Motor Vehicles*. (London: Macmillan, 1987). p.268 Speed limits were not as yet justified by a proven system of documentary evidence on driver behaviour.

⁹ Hargreaves, J., *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women’s Sports*. (London: Routledge, 1997), Lowerson J., in Mason, T., (ed.), *Sport in Britain: A Social History*. (Cambridge: Faber, 1989) and McCrone, K. E., *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870 – 1914*. (London: Routledge, 1988).

riders have been shown elsewhere to be psychologically similar to these earlier ones, despite being raised in a more liberal-minded society.¹⁰

An investigation into the various economic and social factors involved in motorcycle ownership in chapter five revealed that this form of transport could be affordable to most sectors of society, including in some circumstances the willingness to engage in some form of credit. This has been investigated for other areas of consumerism in for instance, the work of Taylor and O'Connell.¹¹ Although the need for credit was not always apparent, given that some entry-level machines could and were purchased very cheaply and repaired by the owner as was testified by some interviewees. The research revealed motorcycle use to be common throughout society, even if for example only the media of newspapers or other literary forms are taken into account. A snapshot of usage derived from documents found at Durham County Records Office regarding registrations in the Darlington area, when cross-referenced with local directories proved this claim to be true. A wide diversity of individuals from Gentleman to shop-assistant, owned motorcycles in this town, and it is some form of testimony to the enthusiasm, that social class or profession did not necessarily dictate the sophistication or value of the machine owned. Darlington is an ordinary northern town. It was chosen because appropriate records exist from which a national picture could be extrapolated of the social class range of ownership of the nation.

Motorcycling had by the interwar period become a perceptible element within some artistic forms, due both to its acceptance as a viable means of transport and the vitality associated within the aura of the machine. Concentrating upon these areas filled in gaps in

¹⁰ See, McDonald-Walker, S., *Bikers: Culture, Politics and Power*. (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

¹¹ Taylor, A., *Working Class Credit and Community Since 1918*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) and O'Connell, S., *The Car...* Chapter 1.

the overall picture of the movement, which might otherwise have been confined to the machines as consumer goods or sports machines. It was found necessary to concentrate upon a national picture of these genres rather than a local level because of the scarcity of relevant data in the latter. This study has shown that despite there being no recognisable genre attributable to the motorcycle in areas of literature, music, film or art, traceable elements existed in all these areas. Literary references to the motorcycle were found in the works of Dorothy L. Sayers and others and have been studied elsewhere.¹² Travelogues in general were a popular genre and motorcycling journeys were included such as those undergone by Wallach and Blenkiron or Fulton but have not until recently been studied at academic level.¹³ Popular music relating to motorcycling was found, although interviewees seldom remembered it. There are some examples of motorcycling-related films still in existence in the Vintage Motor Cycle Club archives, which provide invaluable insight into both the industry and general motorcycling of this period. The Futurist movement's obsession with motion and machinery included motorcycles in its interests, whilst Art Deco influenced their design to a small extent, especially in Britain. These were to provide a seed for the subsequent creation of appropriate genres, existing in for example the profusion of motorcycle travelogues; biker-orientated music such as Rock & Roll; the often-exploitative biker movies of the 1960s and 70s; and the ultimate epitome of the motorcycle as an artistic form, the custom bike; recognisable as a portrayal of individual taste and expertise in mechanical manufacture and given artistic legitimacy by the Guggenheim museum.¹⁴

¹² <http://www.chriswillis.freemove.co.uk/Sayersbikes.htm>.

¹³ Wallach, T., *The Rugged Road*. (1936; London: Panther Publishing, 2001) and Fulton, R. E., *One Man Caravan*. (1937; New Hampshire: Whitehorse Press, 1996).
http://ijms.nova.edu/July2006/IJMS_Resources/AlfordFerriss.html

¹⁴ Guggenheim Museum, *The Art of the Motorcycle*. (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2001).

In conclusion, the interwar period is identifiable as a unique age in the story of British motorcycling. The two conflicts provided radical staging points in the motorcycling enthusiasm. The First World War allowed many Britons of both genders and all social classes to become familiarised with transport technology, many for the first time. The Second World War saw a similar use of the motorcycle in despatch and other duties, providing work for many manufacturers. Both these conflicts also provided many cheap machines for subsequent private use. The intervening years witnessed the development of a more reliable machine, which was almost universally acceptable as both a utility and sporting vehicle and remained so until cheap cars flooded the market, became the most prolific form of personal motorised transport. After the Second World War, motorcycling maintained a steady popularity, its utility value being great in an austere economy. Social acceptance of the motorcycle changed when it became associated with rebellious youthfulness during the 1950s and 1960s. Despite this, its enthusiast base as well as its industry remained strong until the demise of the latter during the 1970s as a result of outmoded manufacturing techniques, mismanagement, the influx of more reliable Japanese imports and the continued dominance of the motorcar.

Motorcycling developed during the interwar period into a pastime with growing numbers of enthusiasts with a penchant for associational life. The pursuit did touch on a variety of cultural aspects in for instance, modern art, literature, film and music, but this was largely marginal, and its importance as a form of transport was ultimately sidelined by the rapid growth of motorcar manufacture in the period. Nevertheless, motorcycling, with its largely organic organisation and the endearing enthusiasm of motorcyclists does illuminate a corner of interwar British social and cultural history. The world described in this thesis is

very different from the motorcycling milieu of the post-war period, with its caricatures of folk devils, gangs and juvenile delinquency.

The motorcycle attracted enthusiasts from all sectors of society, who often shared a common love of mechanical knowledge. The extent to which motorcycling exuded an aura of respectability across the social spectrum during this time has been explored in detail. This provides a counter to the more recognizable image exhibited in the post-war representations of motorcyclists, portrayed in the popular press as rowdy, uncouth, unwashed rebels, and examined as such by some academics.¹⁵ If this study of interwar motorcycling is to be considered a success, it will have addressed some of the issues pertaining to the social, economic and cultural environments within which the riders rode the machines, to the extent that some presently held beliefs and assumptions will be altered. Ideally, the subject will gain more legitimacy, which will hopefully lead to further, more detailed work being undertaken in fields which this work, for reasons of time, logistics and oversight have paid scant regard.

Some examples of further work required exist in a more detailed nationally targeted examination of registrations, which have in the present case been confined to part of the North East of England. This should be extended to cover the rest of the country. A national picture of how motoring law pertaining to two-wheelers, was executed would provide another interesting subject for research. The oral testimonies of motorcyclists of the period must continue to be collected whilst this is possible. Also, a similar study of post Second World War motorcycling would be useful. This would facilitate a meaningful

¹⁵ See Cohen, S., *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. (Bungay: Routledge, 1972), Harris, M., *Bikers: Birth of a Modern Day Outlaw*. (London: Faber & Faber, 1985) and Osgerby, B., *Biker, Truth and Myth: How the Original Cowboy of the Road Became the Easy Rider of the Silver Screen*. (Lewes: The Lyons Press, 2005).

comparison between the two periods and provide a greater understanding of the continuities and discontinuities of twentieth century motorcycling.

Appendix 1.

List of Darlington Motorcycle Types.

Taken from Documents held at Durham County Records Office, (Da/cs 2/22 &2/23). These relate to registrations of motorcycles in the Darlington area in 1920. It is intended that the range and diversity of machines available and owned be shown, denoting both a thriving industry and the popularity of the product. It is derived from addresses given as either in or near Darlington.

Types of machine owned by Darlington residents, registered between 05/01/20 and 29/12/20. Registration numbers HN 1210 to HN 1515. These are first owners, not transferred machines.

Make:	Nominal Horsepower:	Frequency:
ABC Scootamota	1 ½	1
Abingdon	5	1
AJS	6	5
Ariel	3 ½	4
Ariel	5 – 6	1
Ariel	6	1
ASL Precision	4	1
Beaumont	2 ¾	1
Blackburn	5	1
Bradbury	4	1
British Excelsior	2 ½	1
BSA	3 ½	1
BSA	4	2
BSA	4 ¼	2
Calthorpe Precision	2 ¼	1
Chater Lea	2 ½	1
Clyno	2 ½	1
Clyno	5	1
Connaught	2 ½	1
Coulson B	2 ½	1
Diamond	2 ¾	1
Douglas	2 ¾	11
Douglas	4	1
Edmund	2 ¾	1
Enfield	2 ½	2
FN	2 ¾	1
Francis Barnett	2 ¾	1
Harley Davidson	4	1
Hazelwood	6	1
Hobart	2 ¼	1
Hobart	2 ½	2
Humber	2	1
Humber	4 ½	1

Indian	7 – 9	2
JAP	2 ½	1
Kenilworth Cyclette	1 ¼	2
Kenilworth Scooter	1 ¼	1
Kingsbury	2	1
Levis	2 ¼	3
Levis	2 ½	1
Lincoln Elk	3 ½	1
Lloyd Motor Co.	3	1
LMC	3 ½	1
Matchless	8	1
Minerva	5	1
National	2 ¼	2
New Hudson	2 ¼	1
New Hudson	3 ½	1
New Hudson	6	1
New Imperial	8	1
New Rider	2 ¾	1
Norton	3 ½	1
Norton	4	1
NSW	5 – 6	1
NUT	2 ¾	1
NUT	3 ½	1
OK	2 ¼	1
Omega JAP	2 ¾	3
Oswald	2 ¾	2
P & M	3 ½	4
Phoenix	3 ½	1
Quadrant	4	1
Radco	2 ¾	1
Rex	5	1
Rover	5	1
Rover	6	1
Rudge	3 ½	1
Scott	3 ¾	1
Simons	3 ½	1
Sparkbrook	2 ½	2
Sunbeam	3 ½	3
Sunbeam	4	1
Triumph	2 ¼	1

Triumph	2 ½	2
Triumph	2 ¾	2
Triumph	3	1
Triumph	3 ½	4
Triumph	4	8
Velocette	2 ¼	1
Venus	2 ¾	2
Venus	3 ½	1
Wilkin	2 ¾	1
Wolf	2 ½	1
Wolf	2 ¾	3
Zenith	5	1
Zenith	6	1
63 different manufacturers.		136
86 models.		

Appendix 2

Database of Darlington motorcyclists who registered machines in 1920.

This data is derived from Documents held at Durham County Records Office, (Da/cs 2/22 & 2/23) with additional information taken from *Wards Directory*, 1921 -22, *Kelly's Directory of Durham*, 1921, and the *Darlington Year Book and Business Directory*, 1921, held at Darlington Local Studies Centre, from which the occupation of some of the owners was determined. It is intended that an idea of distribution of machines registered during this year will be seen with the accompanying map, (Durham Sheet LV NW & SW 6 inch Ordnance Survey 1923 edition) with each star representing a machine.

Number, prefix HN	Name	No	Address (with house name)	Machine	Rating	Occupation	Residing
1342	Allen, George William	53	Louisa Street	Abingdon	5hp		Not found
1424	Alton, Thomas	8/12	Grange Road	Hobart	2 1/4hp		Not found
1317	Amour, Frederick	73	Cumberland Street	Triumph	4hp		With relative
1485	Ashmore, Arthur		East Mount	Douglas	4hp	Physician	Owner occupier
1395	Bainbridge, Joseph		Northgate, Brookside Villa	Quadrant	4hp	Whitesmith	Owner occupier
1340	Baker, Herbert Edward	7	Lorne Terrace	Ariel	3 1/2hp		Not found
1327	Bancroft, William		Skinnersgate	Wolf	2 3/4hp	Optician	Owner occupier
1326	Beadle, John Robert	55	Belgrave Street, Bank Top	Oswald	2 3/4hp		Lodger
1460	Bell, Joseph	42	Hanover Street	Indian	7/9hp		Not found
1290	Bennett, George Henry	7	Easson Road	Triumph	2 3/4hp	Grocer	Owner occupier
1457	Bennett, Walter		Post House Wynd	Humber	4 1/2hp	Clothier	Owner occupier
1382	Berkinshaw, Frank Hendle	70	Bondgate	Douglas	2 3/4hp	Confectioner	Owner occupier
1475	Bisson, Edgar R	18	Grosvenor Terrace	Levis	2 1/4hp		Lodger
1353	Blands Garage		South Road, Blackwell	Hobart	2 1/2hp	Garage	Owner occupier
1400	Blumer, Eric Noel Fenwick		Carmel View, Carmel Road	Rover	6hp	Mineral agents	Owner occupier
1372	Blumer, Harold Esmond		Carmel View, Carmel Road	Douglas	2 3/4hp	Mineral agents	Owner occupier
1497	Boddy, Walter Hubert	50	Hume Terrace	Norton	3 1/2hp	Joiner	Owner occupier
1432	Boyd, George Henry		Manfield	Rex	5hp		Lodger
1306	Boynton, Perceval		Durham Road	AJS	6hp	Fried fish dealer	Owner occupier
1281	Brayshaw, Horace	134	Westmoreland Street	Diamond	2 3/4hp	Iron dresser	Owner occupier
1299	Brown, Matthew	28	Hazel Avenue	Harley Davidson	4hp	Foreman	Owner occupier
1501	Brown, Wilfed	3	Cedar Street	AJS	6hp	Draughtsman	Owner occupier
1486	Brownlees, William John	38	Greenbank Road	Triumph	4hp	Draughtsman	Owner occupier
1442	Calvert, Ernest	25	Greenbank Road North	NSW	5/6hp	Journalist	Owner occupier

Number, prefix HN	Name	No	Address (with house name)	Machine	Rating	Occupation	Residing
1368	Clapham, William	25	Japan Street	Triumph	2 3/4hp		Not found
1462	Clark, Frederick		Abbey Road, 'Summerhill'	Kenilworth Cyclette	1 1/4hp	Architect	Owner occupier
1437	Cleveland Car Co. Ltd		Grange Road	Venus	3 1/2hp	Garage	Owner occupier
1425	Cole, George Edmund	85	Clifton Road	Ariel	3 1/2hp	Stationer	Owner occupier
1347	Colling, George	72	Fulmer Road	Simons?	3 1/2hp		Not found
1321	Copping, George Sammuel	30	North Road	ABC Skootamota	1 1/2hp	Newsagent	Owner occupier
1212	Coswick, Thomas Arthur	89	Eldon Street	Clyno	2 1/2hp		Not found
1463	Cowan, William		Victoria Road, Coronation Hotel	Triumph	4hp	Publican	Owner occupier
1329	Craig, Harold	40	Piercemont Road	BSA	4 1/4hp	Schoolmaster	Lodger
1265	Creek, Arthur Reginald	16	Greenbank Crescent	Rover	5hp	Clerk	Owner occupier
1454	Davidson, Wilfred	6	Ashleigh Terrace	Francis Barnett	2 3/4hp		With relative
1333	Denham, Frederick	30	Oakdene Avenue	Triumph	4hp		With relative
1328	Docherty, Arthur	19	Napier Street	Zenith	5hp		Not found
1343	Dodds, Norman		Denton Hall	Rudge Multi	3 1/2hp		Not found
1474	Duffy, John	51	Thirlmere Road	Triumph	2 1/2hp		Lodger
1229	Dunn, Arthur C.L.		West Crescent, 'The Haven'	Triumph	4hp	HM Inspector of schools	Owner occupier
1217	Ellam, Hampton Harold	20	Acacia Street	ASL Precision	4hp		Not found
1251	Ellis, Reginald William	6	Burleigh Place	Douglas	2 3/4hp		Not found
1232	Fairless, John	12	Derby Street	Edmund	2 3/4hp		Not found
1470	Freeman, Montague		Neasham Road	P&M	3 1/2hp		Not found
1260	Fuller, William Blanchard	1	Zetland Street	Sunbeam	3 1/2hp	Beer retailer	Owner occupier
1452	George & Jobling	41	Blackwellgate	Beaumont	2 3/4hp	Garage	Owner occupier
1483	Gray, William	11	Sun Street	BSA	4		Not found

Number, prefix HN	Name	No	Address (with house name)	Machine	Rating	Occupation	Residing
					1/4hp		
1434	Green, Gilbert		Neasham Hall	Wolf	2 1/2hp		Not found
1499	Guthrie, Capt. Patrick Hugh	7	Park Terrace	Scott	3 3/4hp	Military officer	Lodger
1245	Hall, Clarence James		Kuden Avenue, 'Sylvan Grove'	Omega Jap	2 3/4hp		With relative
1509	Hardman, Rupert J		Lorne Terrace	National	2 3/4hp		With relative
1498	Hastee, George James	49	Wolsingham Terrace	Triumph	3 1/2hp		Not found
1392	Haward, George Leslie	52	Swinburne Road	Kenilworth Scooter	1 1/4hp	Cabinetmaker	Owner occupier
1482	Hayward, George Alfred		Skinnersgate	Kenilworth Cycllette	1 1/4hp	Bicycle warehouse	Owner occupier
1429	Heavisides, John Marshall	14	Raidsdale Street	Jap	2 1/2hp		Not found
1301	Hose, George Cadogan	1	Granville Terrace	Radco	2 3/4hp		Lodger
1319	Hossent, William Thomas		Tower Road, 'Oakroyd'	Ariel	6hp	Accountant	Owner occupier
1336	Hudson, Charles Frederick	68	Milton Street	Velocette	2 1/4hp	Clerk	Owner occupier
1283	Huidson, John Joseph		Southend Avenue, 'The Ferns'	Minerva	5hp	Gentleman	Owner occupier
1309	Hutchinson, Gordon		Fleece Hotel	Connaught	2 1/2hp	Public house	Owner occupier
1484	Hutchinson, Harry	130	Durham Road	New Rider	2 3/4hp		Not found
1481	Inman, John A	30	Woodlands Terrace	Ariel	5/6hp	Schoolteacher	Lodger
1496	James, Arthur	43	Columbia Street	LMC	3 1/2hp		Not found
1417	Jaques, Robert Henry		Woodlands Road, 'Grismont'	New Imperial	8hp	Gentleman	Owner occupier
1500	Jennings, Charles W	12	Swinburne Road	Norton	4hp	Construction engineer	Owner occupier
1256	Jennings, James		Burtree Lane, 'The Firs?'	Coulson B	2 1/2hp		Not found
1239	John Dixon & Co		Clay Row	Sparkbrook	2 1/2hp	Tractor Engineers	Owner occupier
1248	King, Arthur Ernest	8a	Westbrook Villas	Triumph	3 1/2hp		Lodger
1361	King, George	31	New Model Place	Douglas	2		Not found

Number, prefix HN	Name	No	Address (with house name)	Machine	Rating	Occupation	Residing
	Wallace				3/4hp		
1234	Kirsop, Temple	14	Swinburn Road	Triumph	2 1/2hp	Clerk	Owner occupier
1250	Laws, George		Salters Lane	Kingsbury	2hp		Not found
1223	Lawson, Edwin Marr	14	Cleasby Terrace	Levis	2 1/4hp	Clerk	Owner occupier
1307	Lishman, John Benson	35	Bondgate	Triumph	2 1/4hp	Ironmongers	Owner occupier
1487	Lowe, Richard	10	Uplands Road	P&M	3 1/2hp	Tailor	Owner occupier
1515	Lynch, Arthur Challessor		Cleveland Car Co. Grange Road	Wilkin	2 3/4hp	Garage	Owner occupier
1259	Mackay, Harrison	261	Durham Road	Matchless	8hp	Engineer	Owner occupier
1292	Mansfield, John	17	Chapel Street	Triumph	3 1/2hp		Not found
1284	McGuire, Charles Strickland		Dalton House	Bradbury	4hp		Not found
1458	Mcleod, William	25	Parkgate	AJS	6hp	Beer retailer	Owner occupier
1280	Moffat, John Wallace	31	Duke Street	Venus	2 3/4hp		Lodger
1272	Monrow, John Campbell	13	Oak Dene Avenue	Douglas	2 3/4hp	Mariner	Lodger
1380	Moore, Arthur Wilfred	46	Pease Street, Eastbourne	Omega	2 3/4hp		With relative
1504	Oates Bros.		Skinnersgate	BSA	4hp	Motor engineers	Owner occupier
1469	Oliver, Jacob	26	Thornton Street	Levis	2 1/4hp	Dental assistant	Owner occupier
1240	Pawson, George	9	Craig Street	Humber	2hp		Not found
1349	Peacock, Wilfred Earnest	17	Geneva Terrace	Omega Jap	2 3/4hp	Shunter	Owner occupier
1291	Pearse, Earnest	26	St Lukes Terrace	Calthorpe Precision	2 1/4hp	Fitter	With relative
1269	Pease, Maurice W. R.		Tees Grange	Zenith	6hp	Gentleman	Owner occupier
1322	Penty, Frank		Staindrop Road	New Hudson	3 1/2hp	Managing director	With relative
1357	Porter, William Arthur	57	Woodlands Terrace	Sunbeam	4hp	Clerk	Owner occupier
1350	Porter, William Arthur	57	Woodlands Terrace	P&M	3 1/2hp	Clerk	Owner occupier
1493	Powell, William Percy	15	Grosvenor Street	P&M	3 1/2hp	Shop assistant	Owner occupier

Number, prefix HN	Name	No	Address (with house name)	Machine	Rating	Occupation	Residing
1407	Priestley, Percy	9	Pensbury Street	Blackburn	5hp		With relative
1285	Richardson, Edwin Hey		Neasham	Triumph	4hp	Horticulturalist	Owner occupier
1297	Robinson, John	28	Garden Street	Hazlewood	6hp	Junior tailor	Owner occupier
1428	Rowlatt, Harry	2	Garden Place, Harrogate Hill	Levis	2 1/2hp		Not found
1258	Sandham, Harry	2	Hume Terrace	BSA	4hp	Clerk	Lodger
1242	Scaife, George Richard	30	Reid Street	New Hudson	6hp		Not found
1293	Scott, Maurice John	93	Clifton Road	Lloyd Motor Co.	3hp	Draughtsman	Owner occupier
1264	Sefton, Harry	8	Bright Street	New Hudson	2 1/4hp		Lodger
1370	Sellar, Robert Redvers	20	Belvedere Road	Oswald 2 stroke	2 3/4hp	Insurance superintendent	Owner occupier
1480	Sewell, John Henry	130	Thompson Street	Clyno	5hp	Gentleman	Owner occupier
1287	Shirkfield, Norman William	2	Westbrook Villas	Enfield	2 1/2hp	Butcher	Owner occupier
1302	Smith, C. W. Ltd		Northgate	Sparkbrook	2 1/2hp	Cycle maker	Owner occupier
1282	Smith, Charles William		Northgate	NUT	2 3/4hp	Cycle maker	Owner occupier
1385	Smurthwaite, Herbert	3	Elmfield Terrace	Enfield	2 1/2hp		Not found
1348	Snaith, Albert William	8	Prebend Row	Douglas	2 3/4hp	Butcher	Owner occupier
1273	Snowden, George William		Branson Cottages	National	2 3/4hp		Not found
1506	Stewart, Arthur Edwin	118	Cumberland Street	Triumph	4 hp	Solicitor	Owner occupier
1331	Teeside Farmers Ltd	9	Horsemarket	Venus	2 3/4hp	Agricultural merchant	Owner occupier
1488	Temple, John William	15	Tubwell Row	Indian	7/9hp	Tailor	Owner occupier
1238	Temple, William	29	Surtees Street	British Excelsior	2 1/2hp	Plumber	Owner occupier
1502	Thompson, Alfred Tullock	9	Greenbank Road	Douglas	2 3/4hp	M.B. B.S academic	Owner occupier
1311	Thorpe, William	21	Beechwood Avenue	AJS	6hp	Gentleman	Owner occupier
1346	Thwaites, Arthur Stanley		Langholm Crescent	Sunbeam	3 1/2hp	Boot dealer	Owner occupier

Number, prefix HN	Name	No	Address (with house name)	Machine	Rating	Occupation	Residing
1236	Tweedie, George William	30	Dundee Street	BSA	3 1/2hp		Not found
1332	Varley, Trevor Ronald	35	Stanhope Road	Douglas	2 3/4hp		With relative
1459	Waddington, Reginald G.F.	34	Woodlands Road	Sunbeam	3 1/2hp		Not found
1478	Waters, Robert Alan	96	Victoria Road	NUT	3 1/2hp	Co-op	Owner occupier
1449	Waterstone, William	1	Laurel Street	Ariel	3 1/2hp		Not found
1360	Watson, Thomas William	32	Pendower Street	Hobart	2 1/2hp		Not found
1446	Watt, Charles William	4	George Street	Triumph	3hp	Fitter	Owner occupier
1423	Waugh, Robert William	16	Union Street	OK	2 1/4hp	Furnaceman	Owner occupier
1313	Weavers, John Harris	88	Victoria Road	Triumph	3 1/2hp	Gentleman	Owner occupier
1489	Webster, James	210	Thompson Street West	Phoenix	3 1/2hp		Not found
1495	Wild, Douglas Alexander	7	High Terrace	Douglas	2 3/4hp		Not found
1267	Wilkinson, Clarence	32	Cleveland Terrace	Douglas	2 3/4hp	Cabinetmaker	Owner occupier
1431	Williams, Frank	30	Wolsingham Terrace	FN	2 3/4hp	Fitter	Owner occupier
1279	Wilson, Frederick Heape		Langholm Crescent, 'Reethville'	Chater Lea	2 1/2hp	Gentleman	Owner occupier
1426	Wilson, John Cecil	33	Granger Street	Lincoln Elk	3 1/2hp		Lodger
1430	Wilson, William	35	Pease Street	Triumph	4hp	Clerk	Owner occupier
1398	Wragg, Charles Henry	3	Louisa Street	Wolf	2 3/4hp		With relative
1231	Yorke, Sidney	103	Cumberland Street	Wolf	2 3/4hp		With relative
1211	Young, Wilfred George		Southend Avenue, 'Ravensworth'	Douglas	2 3/4hp	Managing director	Owner occupier
1253	Zissler, Albert		Northgate	Ariel	3 1/2hp	Pork butcher	Owner occupier
1339	Zissler, Charles Henry	106	Bondgate	AJS	6hp	Cycle maker	Owner occupier



Appendix 3.

Motorcycle Club Database.

This data was obtained through perusal of *Motor Cycling* magazine of 1932 and represents a study of clubs during an approximate midpoint of the period.

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES
ABBEY WOOD & DISTRICT	MCC	SE	PAPER CHASE	D. JEAL, 139 PLUMBSTEAD RD. PLUMBSTEAD, S.E.18		
ABERGAVENEY & DISTRICT	MC & LCC	ESW	FREAK HILL CLIMB, DINNER	MR. D. W. JONES, MELROSE, PARK CRES. ABERGAVENEY, MONMOUTH		
ACE	MC	EM	TRIAL			THE ELLIOT CUP
ACE (MITCHAM)	MCC	NA	DANCE, TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT,	MR. P.W. BISHOP, 8 JEDBURGH ST. NORTHSIDE, CLAPHAM COMMON, SW11, MR. E.A. SALE, 23 KILLIESER AVE. STREATHAM HILL, SW2		FIFTY FIFTY TROPHY TRIAL
ACE, (SOUTHAMPTON)	MC & LCC	S	DINNER	MR. ADAMS, (PRES)		
ACE. (COVENTRY)	MC	M	TRIAL, SCRAMBLE, SAUSAGE SUPPER			BETTMAN CUP TRIAL
AERO	MCC	SE	AGM, PILLION TRIAL, GHOST HUNT	MR. P.C. SMITH	THE AERO	
ALBATROSS	MCC	S	GRASSTRACK			
ALFRED HERBERT	MC	NA	TRIAL			
ALTRINCHAM	MC	CH	DINNER, SCRAMBLE, AGM	MR. C. HILDAGE, MAJOR WALLWORK, (PRES)	GEORGE & DRAGON HOTEL, ALTRINCHAM	
AMATEUR	MCC	SM	PAPER CHASE, TIME CONTEST, MATCH TRIAL, VISIT TO HMV, TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT, DANCE, DINNER	MR. G. HUMPHREY, 21 ADAM & EVE MEWS, HIGH ST. KENSINGTON	ANCHOR INN, RIPLEY. BROOK GREEN HOTEL, SHEPHERDS BUSH RD. HAMMERSMITH	RECIPROCAL MEMBERSHIP WITH STREATHAM & D FORMED 1905, IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH A JAPANESE CLUB 21/12/32, P.206
ANNSWORTHY	MC	SE		MR. H.H. DAVIS, 41 HUNTER RD. THORNTON HEATH	NORK GDNS. BANSTEAD	
ARIEL	MC	M	CINEMA, SCRAMBLE, PHOTO COMP. STEEPLECHASE, ROAD RACE	MR. JACK SANGSTER (PRES), MR L.J. MOORE, 120B BALSALL HEATH RD. BIRMINGHAM	BLACK HORSE HOTEL, NORTHFIELD	
ASHTON STAMFORD	MC	CH	AGM, TRIAL, SCRAMBLE, MINI GRAND NATIONAL	MR. H. SCOTT, 109 MOSSLEY RD. ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE	COOP HALL, RUSHTON ST. ASH-U-LYNE	'THE STAMFORDIAN' CLUB MAG. ARTICLE RE SCRUFFINESS, 13/7/32 P.331
ASSOCIATION OF PIONEER MOTORCYCLISTS		NA	RALLY	CAPT. JOHN H. WYLIE, 38 WEST CROMWELL RD. EARLS CT. LONDON SW5		
ASSOCIATION OF UNAFFILIATED CLUBS		NA	GYMKHANA,	MR. L. ROWLANDS, 53 BOURNEMOUTH RD. MERTON PK. SW19		EGG & SPOON, POTATO RACE, MUSICAL CHAIRS
AUSTIN & SOUTH BIRMINGHAM	MCC	M	AGM, TRIAL, GRASSTRACK	MR. C. BEEBY	BLACK HORSE HOTEL	
AVALON	MC	WX	TRIAL, M/C FOOTBALL			

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
AYR	MCC	SC	AGM,	MR. J. G. THOMSON, 52 VIEWFIELD RD. AYR	EX-SERVICEMENS CLUB		
BANKING & INSURANCE	AC	SM	TREASURE HUNT,	MR.K.D. JOPP, 21 SOUTH CLOSE, MORDEN, SURREY, MR. POTTIER, 48 SHERN HALL ST. WALTHAMSTOW, E.17			
BARNETBY & DISTRICT	MC	EM	TRIAL, SCRAMBLE, AGM, SPEED HILL CLIMB, GRASSTRACK	MR. J. W. HARRINGTON, ELSHAM, BRIGG, HANTS			
BARNSBURY AMATEURS	MC	SM	NEW YR CUP TRIAL, AGM, GRASS TRACK,	MR. H.A. SALES, 354 CALEDONIAN RD. BARNSBURY. MR. C.H. POULTON, ASPENDEN, BUNTINGFORD, HERTS	41 COPENHAGEN ST		
BARNSBURY PIONEERS	MC	NA	XMAS PARTY, RUN, HIKING RUN, SPEED JUDGING, AGM, DINNER, NIGHT TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, PARTY	MR. E. FLEET	RISING SUN, BROOKSBY ST. N1, THE BULL, HODDESDON		
BARNSLEY	MCC	Y	TRIAL,			ARMITAGE TRIAL	
BARRY	MC	ESW	ANNUAL DINNER & DANCE AGM, TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, GYMKHANA, TREASURE HUNT, RALLY,	MR J. PROCTOR 15 HOLTON ROAD, BARRY	15 HOLTON RD. BARRY	ALL CHANGE RUN, ROUGH RIDERS RAMBLE	
BASINGSTOKE & DISTRICT	MC & LCC	SE	TRIAL, DANCE	MR. F.D. TOMLIN, GREAT WESTERN HOTEL		MARCH HARE TRIAL	
BATH & AVON	MCC	WX	TRIAL, DANCE, HAIR & HOUNDS TRIAL, SPEED HILL CLIMB,	MR. S. ROBERTS, 25 RUDMORE PK. BATH, MR. D. W. HARRISON, FORD, CHIPPENHAM, WILTS.		FEE 6s	
BATH & WEST OF ENGLAND	MC	WX	GRASSTRACK				
BAYSWATER	MCC	SE	TRIALS, SOCIAL EVENTS, RUNS, SAWDUST CHASE, DYE CHASE, TREASURE HUNT, DANCE, CAMPING WEEKEND, GYMKHANA, HILL CLIMB, FLANNEL DANCE, GRASSTRACK, TENNIS, PILLION TRIAL, DINNER	C.J. ROTH, 48 PORTSDOWN RD. MAIDA VALE, W9. MR. R.W. CHAPMAN, 70 SIXTH AVE. QUEENS PK. NW10	ABERCORN HOTEL, STANMORE, THE PEMBRIDGE CASTLE, LEDBURY RD. BAYSWATER.	WINE CUP TRIAL, SEE 22/6/32 FOR GYMKHANA EVENTS	
BEAR'S HEAD	MCC	SC	HILL CLIMB, PILLION TRIAL, AGM	MR. R.D. SCOTT		BILLY GALLOWAY, (DIRT TRACKER)	
BEARWOOD AMATEUR	MC & CC	M	AGM	MRS. D. TAYLOR, 25 LIVINGSTONE RD. BHAM.	KINGS HEAD, HAGLEY RD. BHAM.		
BELFAST & DISTRICT	MCC	I	AGM, TRIAL, HILL CLIMB	ANGUS MCLARDY		DESPITE INDUSTRIAL DEPRESSION, MEMBERSHIP	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
						STRONG, JAN20	
BELLSHILL	MC	SC	SPEED TRIALS,			SPEED TRIALS ON PUBLIC HIGHWAYS, GLASGOW-EDINBURGH RD.	
BENTLEY SERVICE	MCC	NA		MR. C.D. HADDOCK, KINGSBURY RD. HENDON, NW9			
BERKHAMSTEAD & DISTRICT	MCC	SM	AGM, TRIAL, SPEED TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, GRASSTRACK, NIGHT TRIAL, GARDEN PARTY, GYMKHANA, ANNUAL DINNER	MR.A. PAUL & MR. L.F. SAURVOURNIN, 2 ST. ALBANS RD. WATFORD.	KING'S ARMS HOTEL, BLUE ROOM,	WINWOOD CUP TRIAL, FREDDY HICKS MEMORIAL, MR. & MRS. ARMAND BLACKLEY, BUSHEY, HERTS. PROF. A. M. LOWE VICE CAPT.	
BERKSWELL & DISTRICT, COVENTRY	MCC	NA	DANCE, GRASSTRACK, TRIAL	46 BROWETT RD. RADFORD, COVENTRY	BEAR INN, BERKSWELL		
BERMONDSEY	MCC	SE	DINNER, MYSTERY RUN, TRIAL, AGM	MR. S. KETTEL, 49 NEPTUNE ST. SE.16	BRIDGE HOUSE HOTEL, LONDON BR.		
BEXLEYHEATH & DISTRICT	MCC	SE	AGM, TRIAL, DANCE, SOCIAL RUN, FOOTBALL	MR. V. M. PETERS,	THE THREE BLACKBIRDS, BLENDON. AERO CAFE POL HILL	LANGMAID TRIAL, FEE 7/6	
BILSTON & DISTRICT	AC	NA	DANCE, RELIABILITY TRIAL, SCRAMBLE, TIME TRIAL	MR. A HAYCOCK, 40 LORD ST. BRADLEY, BILSTON, MR. GEOFFREY PETO, MP. (PRES)	THE BLUE BOAR, OXFORD ST. BILSTON	MR. G. PETO, MP (PRES)	
BIRCHINGTON & DISTRICT	MC	NA	TRIAL, ALL NIGHT TRIAL	MR. C.R. EDMUNDS, STATION APPROACH, BIRCHINGTON	NEW INN		
BIRMINGHAM	MCC	M	HILL CLIMB, TRIAL, DANCE, BALL				
BISHOP AUCKLAND & DISTRICT	MC	NE	GYMKHANA, DETAILS 3/8/32 P416	MR. H. STEPHENSON, SANDCROFT, ETHERLEY LANE, BISHOP AUCKLAND		SPENNYMOOR MEMBERS JOINED APRIL 1932	
BISHOPS WALTHAM	MCC	S	SCRAMBLE, TRIAL, AGM, GRASSTRACK, MINIATURE TT. HILL CLIMB, GYMKHANA, RUN, MC FOOTBALL, YOYO COMP.	MR. S. TRIGG (PRES), MR. H. LEE, LOWER LANE, BISHOPS WALTHAM, HANTS.		SEE YOYO COMP. 21/10/32 P.631	
BLACKMORE VALE	MCC	S	AGM, TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT, MINIATURE TT. GRASSTRACK, BALL	MR. W.D. ALLUM, BERRYHURST, COPPICE ST. SHAFTSBURY		ANNUAL INVITATION TRIAL, GROSVENOR CUP TRIAL, DETAILS OF TR. HUNT. 2/3/32 P.567	
BLACKPOOL	MC & LCC	NW	TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT, MINIATURE TT. WHIST DRIVE, DANCE	MR. A.H. GARLAND, 7 BIRLEY ST. BLACKPOOL		GAGGS CUP TRIAL	
BOHEMIAN	MC	SM	GRAND SOCIAL, SPEED COMP. SURPRISE RUN, SOCCER, BRIDGE BALL, FOOTBALL, AGM, TRAMP SUPPER, HILL CLIMB, GRASSTRACK, DANCE. ARMISTICE	H. CHIC FOWLER, 19 BACCHUS WALK, N1 MR. G. WOOD, 46 BOOKHAM ST. N.1 MR. RENOLD OF RENNOS MC AGENT (VP)	'LORD RAGLAN' SOUTHGATE RD. N1, OUTSIDE RENNO'S, UPPER ST. ISLINGTON	CHESHUNT SPEED JUDGING COMP. FEE 6/6, USE OF MR. MARTIN'S ESTATE, BILLERICAY, A.; TRAMPS SHOULD BRING A DRINKING VESSEL AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENT	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
			SOCIAL, TREASURE HUNT, XMAS DINNER				
BOLTON	MCC	NW	TRIAL, DANCE, HILL CLIMB, RUN, GRASS TRACK, RELIABILITY TRIAL, TOUR, GYMKHANA, CARNIVAL DANCE, DINNER	MR. S. WALKER, 21 CRAWFORD AVE, BOLTON	EMPIRE CAFÉ, BOLTON	PRESIDENTS CUP TRIAL, FARM HOUSE RALLY, SUGAR LOAF HILL	
BRADFORD & DISTRICT	MC	Y	DINNER, CINEMA, HILL CLIMB, SPORTING TRIAL, POTHOLING RUN, ROAD TRIAL	MR T. SOWERBY, 3 CLIFTON VILLAS, BRADFORD	BELLE VUE HOTEL	PARK RASH HILL CLIMB	
BRANDS HATCH COMBINE	MCC	SE	GRASS TRACK,	MR. C. S. JULL, 56 WARWICK RD. SIDCUP		A COMBINATION OF SIDCUP OWLS, WEST KENT, & BERMONDSEY MCCs	
BRENTWOOD & DISTRICT	MC & LCC	E	TRIAL, AGM		SWAN INN	BRENTWOOD CUP TRIAL	
BRIGHTON & DISTRICT	MCC	SE	SPORTING RUN, TRIAL	G. DAWSON, 44 HOLLINGDEAN TCE. BRIGHTON			
BRIGHTON & HOVE	MC	SE	AGM, SPEED TRIAL	MR. G. PATRICK, ST. JOHNS TCE RD. EARLSWOOD, REDHILL, SURREY			
BRISTOL	MC & LCC	WX	SCRAMBLE, TRIAL, RACE, DINNER & DANCE	MR. F.W. WILSHIRE	STAR INN, TICKENHAM	TRIAL 9/4/32 HAD 2 PEOPLE CALLED DOUGLAS RIDING DOUGLAS'S, 21st ANNIVERSARY	
BRITISH 2 STROKE CLUB		NT	TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT, AGM, RALLY, DISTANCE JUDGING	MR. G. W. BRIDGES, BRIDLE RD. CALAIS GATE, EPSOM, PROF. A.M. LOW, (PRES) MR. C.P. MONTAGUE, 20 WYNELL RD. FOREST HILL, S.E. 23	THE BARLEY MOW, BETCHWORTH	LEVIS TRIAL, FB TROPHY TRIAL, SEE P751 FOR RALLY PRIZE INFO. SCOTT TRIAL, FEE 7/6- SOS TRIAL	
BRITISH EMPIRE	MC	CAN	SHOW				
BROMLEY & DISTRICT	MC&CC	SE	TRIAL, SOCIAL DINNER, AGM,	MR. T. WYCHERLEY,	THE PLOUGH, BROMLEY COMMON, SAWYERS ARMS, BROMLEY COMMON	PRESIDENTS CUP, SECDOR CUP, FEE 2s PER QUARTER	
BUCKS COUNTY	MC	SM	AGM, DANCE, TRIAL, GRASSTRACK, GYMKHANA, SPORTING TRIAL, CONDUCTED TRIAL	MR P. MANLEY, MR. A. WEST, 8 BRIDGE ST. MAIDENHEAD	RED LION HOTEL, HIGH WYCOMBE		
BUTH WELLS & DISTRICT	MCC	WSW	GRASSTRACK, TRIAL, SCRAMBLE				
BURNLEY	MC	NW	SCRAMBLE, TREASURE HUNT, DISTANCE JUDGING, TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, MOORLAND TT. GRASSTRACK, GYMKHANA, AGM, DINNER & DANCE	MR. W. LORD, 11 LANSDOWNE ST. BURNLEY, MR. W. WHITEMAN, 28 REDVERS ST. BURNLEY	EMPRESS HOTEL, BURNLEY		

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
BURTON & DISTRICT	MC & LCC	EM	DANCE	MR. A. GILBERT, 79 STATION ST. BURTON-UPON-TRENT			
BURY & DISTRICT	MC	NW	INVITATION RUN, MAP READING				
CAMBERLEY & DISTRICT	MC	SM	SOUTHERN SCOTT SCRAMBLE, GYMKHANA, POLO, FOOTBALL, RODEO, GRASSTRACK, TRIAL	MR. A. B. SPARKS, MR. E.D. LAWRENCE, KINGSLER GARAGE, CAMBERLEY		GARDEN ROLLER RACE, 10/8/32 P.457	
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY	AC	SM	INTER-VARSITY RELIABILITY TRIAL, NOV 12 BETWEEN MARLOW & TRING			SEE 23/11/32 P.87 FOR RESULTS OF INTER V TRIAL	
CARDIFF	MC & LCC	ESW	GYMKHANA, TRIAL	MR. ALEX THOM, (PRES)			
CARMARTHEN	MC & LCC	WSW	SPEED CHAMPIONSHIP			PENDINE SANDS	
CARSHALTON	MCC	SE	DINNER, CARNIVAL DANCE, PILLION TRIAL, SPORTS GALA, ANNUAL DINNER & DANCE	MR. A.D. WESTON, 36 COLLEGE RD. EPSOM, MR G. A. WHITE, 58 WHITFORD GDNS. MITCHAM, SURREY.	RED LION HOTEL, COULSDON	LADIES ANKLE JUGGLING COMP. EARL & COUNTESS OF MARCH.	
CATERPILLAR	MC	NA	PARTY, TRIAL, DANCE, PASSENGER TRIAL,	MR. W.K. LININGTON, 59 SKELTON RD. FOREST GATE, E.7	RAINDEER GARAGE, EPPING NEW RD.	WHITES TROPHY TRIAL	
CAVENDISH	AC	SM	CHILTERN TRIAL				
CHADWELL HEATH & DISTRICT	MC & CC	E	AGM,		MAYFIELD HALL, 686 GREEN LANE, GOODMAYES	DEFUNCT, 18/5/32	
CHAPELTOWN	MCC	Y	SPEED JUDGING, DANCE, DINNER	MR. G. R. GOODACRE	NEWTON MEMORIAL HALL		
CHARLTON AMATEUR	MC	SE	RUN, SMOKING CONCERT, ROUTE FINDING TRIAL, NIGHT TRIAL, NOVELTY RUN	W.S MEERS, 3 HARVEY RD. BLACKHEATH, SE.3	SWAN HOTEL, CHARLTON VILLAGE, SE7		
CHELTENHAM	MCC	W	TRIAL, M/C FOOTBALL, MOTOR RODEO, DINNER, DANCE	MR.F.BOND	ATHLETIC GROUND, ALBION ST.	CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE TROPHY TRIAL, DONATED £400 CLUB FUNDS FOR AMBULANCE, 14/10/32 P.605	
CHESHUNT & DISTRICT	MC	SM	NEW YRS PARTY, SCRAMBLE, FOOTBALL, TREASURE HUNT, SPEED JUDGING, XMAS DINNER	MR. C. BROWN	AVISS HALL, GREEN ST. ENFIELD HIGHWAY WELCOME CAFÉ, HQ. NAZEING COMMON		
CHESTER	MC	CH	AGM, SPORTING TRIAL, SCRAMBLE, SAND RACE, GRASSTRACK, SPEED JUDGING	MR. T. H. SANDLAND. MR P. KAY, 35 NEW QUAIN ST. CHESTER. CAPT. BROWN BOWLEY, 54 CANTERBURY AVE. WALLASEY, CHESHIRE		DUKE OF WESTMINSTER, (PRES) SAND RACE AT WALLASEY, SOME CLUB RULES: 16/11/32 P.59	
CHICHESTER	MC	SE		MR. L.V. WESTON, ALMA. ST. PAUL'S	WELLINGTON INN. BROYLE RD.		

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
				RD. CHICHESTER	CHICHESTER		
CHURCH & OSWALDTWISTLE	MC & LCC	NW	TRIAL, SCRAMBLE,	MR. J. SCHOFIELD, 46 JAMES ST. GT. HARWOOD	CORPORATION ARMS, LONGRIDGE		
CIVIL SERVICE MOTORING ASSOC.		SM	TRIAL, PILLION TRIAL	CSMA OFFICES, 11 VICTORIA ST. LONDON SW1 MR. T. DAVIS, 182 BROMYARD RD. HALL GREEN		OPEN TO ARMED FORCES AND CIVIL SERVICE, 'THE GAZETTE'	
CLACTON ON SEA & DISTRICT	MC	E	TRIAL			WESTWOOD TROPHY TRIAL	
COLWYN BAY & DISTRICT	MC	NW	TREASURE HUNT, TRIAL,	MR. R. GLYNNE OWEN, WHALLEY GRANGE, COLWYN BAY, MR. T.A. HUGHES, HILL SIDE, 119 CAERNARVON RD. BANGOR	SUN INN, OLD COLWYN.		
COOKSTOWN & DISTRICT	MCC	I	RACE				
CORBRIDGE	MC	NA		MR. J. RICHLEY, ST. HELEN'S ST. CORBRIDGE		NEW CLUB APRIL 1932	
CORK	MCC	I		MR. CHAS. MOONEY, 69 ST. KEVIN SQ. CORK			
CORK & DISTRICT	MCC	I	RELIABILITY TRIAL, GRASSTRACK	64 PARK ST. CORK			
COVENTRY	POMC	NA					
COVENTRY MAGNET SOCIAL CLUB		M	TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT,	MR. R. TURNER, c/o GENERAL ELECTRIC TELEPHONE WKS. CANTEEN, STOKE, COVENTRY		BSA CUP TRIAL ENTRY 2/6	
COVENTRY POST OFFICE	MC	NA	TRIAL, DANCE	MR. J.G. ELKINGTON, 49 WESTWOOD RD. EARLSDON, COVENTRY			
CREWE & SOUTH CHESHIRE	MCC	CH	TRIAL, M/C FOOTBALL				
CROYDON	MC	SE	AGM, DANCE, TREASURE HUNT	MR. R.A. BIRCHLEY, 'MALVERNIA' BENSAM LANE, THORNTON HEATH, SURREY	WINDMILL HOTEL, ST. JAME'S RD. CROYDON		
CRYSTAL PALACE SPEEDWAY SUPPORTERS		NA	TRIAL		THE LARCHES, GREEN ST. GREEN		
CUMBERLAND COUNTY	MCC	N	TRIAL				
CYNET	MC & MCC	M	DINNER	MR. SURSHAM	SWAN HOTEL, BRIDGNORTH		
DARLINGTON	MC	Y	TRIAL, AGM, GRASSTRACK, SCRAMBLE, TREASURE HUNT, DANCE	MR. J. RICHMOND, THE MEAD, DARLINGTON, MR. R.T. GOOGER, 40 TUBEWELL ROW, DARLINGTON, MR. R. T. GOODYER, (SEC), MR. C.U. PEAT, MP (PRES), J. B. GOLDSWORTHY	FLEECE HOTEL, BLACKWELLGATE	BOXING DAY TRIAL, WILLOW BR. SPEEDWAY, MEMBERSHIP 112, FEE 7/6, STANTON SCRAMBLE, G.ZIZZLER, A MEMBER	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
DEESIDE TRIALS GROUP		CH	TRIALS	MR. J. SMITH, 27 FAULKNER ST. HOOLE, CHESHIRE			
DERBY & DISTRICT	MC	EM	SPEED MEETINGS, ROAD RACES, TRIAL, NIGHT TRIAL, MOTOR BALL	MR. F. G. CRANER, 938 LONDON RD. ALBASTON, NR.DERBY	DONNINGTON HALL		
DEWSBURY	MSC	Y	GRASSTRACK				
DONS	MC	NA	TRIAL, SCROUNGERS RUN, SPEEDWAY, GRAND NATIONAL TEASER, CONDUCTED TRIAL, AGM	MR. D. T. COGGAN, 33 SISTOVER RD, BALHAM SW12	THE BULL, BIRCHWOOD	SCUTT CUP TRIAL, DONS DERBY	
DUBLIN & DISTRICT	MCC	I	TRIAL, DINNER,		DOLPHIN HOTEL	BOXING DAY TRIAL, DUNLOP CUP	
DUBLIN UNIVERSITY	MC & LCC	I	HILL CLIMB, TRIAL	MR. G. M. CAMPBELL, 30 TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN			
DUMFRIES & DISTRICT	MC & LCC	SC	TRIAL, HILL CLIMB	MR. G. MCLEAN		JAMES CUP TRIAL	
DUNFERMLINE & DISTRICT	MCC	SC	GRASSTRACK	MR. N. WARD, 37 PARKSIDE ST. ROSYTH			
DUNSTABLE & DISTRICT	MC	SM	ANNUAL DINNER, TRIAL, GRASSTRACK	MR GRAHAM W. WALKER	YE OLD SUGAR LOAF HOTEL	CARRUTHERS CUP, GRAHAM WALKER	
EAST CHESHIRE TRIALS GROUP		CH	TRIAL,	MR. B. J. GREENWOOD			
EAST FIFE	MC	SC	GRASSTRACK,	VICTORIA HOTEL, ELIE			
EAST LANCASHIRE	MC & LCC	NW	MINIATURE TT.				
EAST PK. GLASGOW	MCC	SC	TRIAL, PILLION TRIAL, SCRAMBLE, HILLCLIMB, GRASSTRACK, GYMKHANA, WHIST DRIVE & DANCE	MR. J. NOBLE, 84 SANDA ST. GLASGOW,		PILLION TRIAL = A TRIAL CARRYING PASSENGERS, 11/5/32	
EASTBOURNE	MC & LCC	NA	GRASSTRACK, GYMKHANA	MR. TINY LEWIS, 1 SEASIDE, EASTBOURNE, CAPT. SHORT			
ECCLES & DISTRICT	MC	CH	DINNER, TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT	MR. T.S. GREENHALGH, 23 HIBBERT ST. RUSHOLME, MANCHESTER	UNICORN HOTEL, PEEL GREEN ECCLES		
EDINBURGH SOUTHERN	MC		HILL CLIMB			PEASE BAY HILL CLIMB	
ELTHAM & DISTRICT	MCC	SE	TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT	L. J. PROOPS, 87 HORS A RD. NORTHUMBERLAND HEATH, ERITH, KENT			
ENFIELD & DISTRICT	MC&CC	SM	ANNUAL DANCE, AGM, SMOKING CONCERT, RELIABILITY TRIAL, ALL NIGHT RUN, DINNER	MR. E. F.D. POTTIER, 48 SHERNHALL ST. WALTHAMSTOW, E17	ROBIN HOOD, BOTANY BAY	PROF LOW, 'SOUND & NOISE' FLORENCE RESTAURANT RUPERT ST. W.	
EVESHAM	MC	M	GRASSTRACK				

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
EXETER	MC	SW	AGM, TRIAL, SPORTING TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, AMERICAN HILL CLIMB	MR. L. J. HAWKINS, 174 SIDWELL ST. EXETER	IMPERIAL HOTEL		
FAIRFIELD	MC	NA	WHIST DRIVES				
FALCON	MCC	NA	TRIAL	MR. E. HUTCHINSON, 4/81 CLARK ST. LADYWOOD BHAM.			
FOREIGN TOUR CLUB		NA	TOURING	MR. H. STUBBINGS, 2 KNOTTS GREEN RD. LEYTON, E10	CAMDEN HEAD, CAMDEN ST. ISLINGTON GREEN		
FOREST GATE & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	MOUNTNESSING MANOEUVRES, SCRAMBLE, DANCE, GRASSTRACK, TRIAL, TRIP TO SCIENCE MUSEUM OCT 16	MR. G. E. STIMSON, 1 THE AVENUE, HORNCHURCH, ESSEX.		MOUNTNESSING (A VENUE) MANOEUVRES, TRES BON SCRAMBLE	
FROME & DISTRICT	MC & LCC	WX	SOCIAL RUN, TRIAL	MR. T.W. COLGRAVE, 15 ROSSITERS HILL, FROME, SOMERSET		LORD & LADY WEYMOUTH	
G.P.O. ENGINEERS	MC	NA	AGM	MR. A. E. RATCLIFFE, HILLSIDE.	E IN C'S OFFICE, DENHAM ST. EC1		
GAINSBOROUGH	MCC	EM	AGM, GRASSTRACK	MR. S. BATEMAN			
GATESHEAD & DISTRICT						SEE PHOTO FROM TWAS DX955	
GIPSEY	MCC	NA	SPORTING TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, SIDECAR TRIAL, DINNER, AGM		THE HORNS, KENNINGTON PK. RD.	AVG ATTENDANCE OF THE 38 RUNS OF THE SEASON = OVER 50 9/11/32 P.28a EPSOM CLOCK TOWER SUNDAYS, RAIN OR SHINE FOR RUNS.	
GLASGOW UNIVERSITY	MCC	SC	RUN	DR. MORRISON			
GLOSSOP & DISTRICT	MC	NA	INVITATION TRIAL, GYMKHANA				
GLOUCESTER	MC & LCC	W	SOLO TRIAL, GRAND NATIONAL, SPEED TRIAL,	MR. S. C. HOLBROOK, 41 JERSEY RD. GLOUCESTER, MR. R. MATTHEWS, BLUEHILLS, INNSWORTH, NR. GLOUCESTER	SPREAD EAGLE HOTEL		
GOOLE	MC & LCC	NA	SUPPER, DINNER	MR. SIDNEY COLLIER, 51 WESTFIELD AVE. GOOLE	SYDNEY HOTEL, AIRE ST. GOOLE	FORMED 1931	
GRANTHAM	MC	EM	GRAND PRIX, ROAD RACE, DINNER	MR. H. F. BELLAMY, 147 HARLAXTON RD. GRANTHAM		SYSTON GRAND PRIX, SEE 23/11/32 P.87 ON RIDER SKILL	
GRASSHOPPER.	MC	NA	TRIAL, GYMKHANA, PILLION TRIAL	MR. R. BAKER, 42 ALLANDALE RD. ROMFORD, ESSEX, MR. W.M. FISHER, ALDWYCH, WINGLETYE LANE, HORNCHURCH.			

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
				ESSEX			
GRAVESEND & DISTRICT	MC	SE	GRASSTRACK	D.E. JOHNSTONE, TOLL GATE INN, GRAVESEND			
GREEN LINE SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB		NA	DANCE		GREEN LINE GARAGE, WATFORD		
GREENWICH	M & MCC	SE	DANCE, AGM, SPORTING TRIAL, GYMKHANA	MR. H. SLADEN	GREENWICH BOROUGH HALL		
GRIMSBY & CLEETHORPES	MC	EM	TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, GRASSTRACK	J.W. CLARK, SANDHURST, 289 ROBERT ST. GRIMSBY			
GUILDFORD	MC	SE	FOLLOW MY LEADER RUN	D.P. WILSON, MARKENFIELD GARAGES, WOODBIDGE RD. GUILDFORD.		FOLLOW MY LEADER RUN, ALLERY CUP TRIAL	
HALE END & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	AGM, TRIAL, SPEED JUDGING TREASURE HUNT, DANCE,	MR. A.J. SIMPSON, 33 KITCHENER RD. WALTHAMSTOW E17			
HALLAMSHIRE, (SHEFFIELD)	MC	Y	RUN, TRIAL				
HALSTEAD & DISTRICT	MCC	E	DANCE	MR. C. D. NEWPORT, HOLT ST. EARLS COLNE	VILLAGE HALL		
HANDSWORTH, (SHEFFIELD)	MC	Y	RUN, TRIAL, SEMI SPORTING TRIAL, ROAD TRIAL, PILLION TRIAL	MR. S.C. BREKIN			
HARRINGAY & DISTRICT	MC	SM	TRIAL, DANCE, AGM, DINNER		WHITE HART INN, CAMBRIDGE RD. N.17		
HARROW & DISTRICT	MC	SM	AGM	MR. W. J. LAKE	THE ALMA, HARROW WEALD, PORLOCK WEIR VILLAGE HALL		
HARROWGATE	MC	Y	GRASSTRACK,	MR. W.W. BAXTER, 58 WEDDERBURN ROAD, HARROWGATE		GRASSTRACK ON A CRICKET FIELD!	
HARTLEPOOL	MCC	NA	RELIABILITY TRIAL, GYMKHANA			WHITBY RELIABILITY TRIAL	
HASTINGS & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	GRASSTRACK, TRIAL	MR. G. BLUCK, DALKEITH, MILLWOOD CRES. HASTINGS			
HAYWARDS HEATH & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	TRIAL	MR. E.C. NICHOLS, 30 HAYWARDS RD. HAYWARDS HEATH			
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD	MC	NA	GRASSTRACK,	MR. C. D. MOOR, FLAUNDEN, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD	BOXMOOR SPEEDWAY	NEW CLUB	
HEMSWORTH	MC	NA	PILLION TRIAL, GYMKHANA, RACE, HILL CLIMB	MR. J.R. THORPE		NEW CLUB, 18/5/32	
HEMSWORTH EAGLE	MC	NA	HILL CLIMB, RODEO, MINI TT		SOUTH HIENDLEY		
HENDON & DISTRICT	MCC	NA				FORMED 10/11/32	
HERTFORD & DISTRICT	MCC	SM	SPORTING TRIAL, GRASSTRACK, AGM	MR. F. GOBBEE, 106 RAILWAY ST. HERTFORD. MR. J.	CLOCK HOUSE, HODDESDON, WHITE HART	BECAME EAGLE MC IN 21/10/32	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
				TAYLOR	HOTEL, HERTFORD, THE CROWN CLUBROOM		
HIGHBRIDGE & DISTRICT	MCC	NA					
HILLSBOROUGH, (SHEFFIELD)	MC	Y	DINNER, TRIAL, FOOTBALL, LECTURE, NOVICES TRIAL	MR B. J. HARRIS	GRAND HOTEL, SHEFFIELD	LITTON SLACK TRIAL	
HONITON	MC & LCC	SW	AGM, TRIALS, HILL CLIMB, GRASSTRACK, RODEO,	MR. A.C. ROBERTS		10TH ANNIVERSARY, 31/8/32	
HORNETS (POOLE)	MCC	NA	TRIAL, HILL CLIMB		GEORGE HOTEL		
HORSFORTH & DISTRICT	MC	Y	AGM	MR. C. W. STOTT			
HORSHAM & DISTRICT	MC&LCC	SE	SCRAMBLE, DINNER & DANCE, FOLLOW MY LEADER RUN, RODEO	H.W. BRYON, 4 PARK TCE, WEST HORSHAM, SUSSEX	BLACK HORSE HOTEL, HORSHAM	SCRAMBLE	
HOUNSLOW	MC & CC		PILLION TRIAL,	MR. LIDDLE, 56 FRANCIS RD, HOUNSLOW WEST	THE NAGS HEAD	KIDDLE CUP	
HULL	MC	NA	SOCIAL RUN, SMOKING CONCERT, TRIAL, HILL CLIMB	MR. H. G.G. DALLING, 14 NEWLAND PK. HULL	GROSVENOR HOTEL		
HURLINGHAM	MCC	SE	DANCE	MR. A. W. GRACE, 17 OSBORN RD. SPARKHILL, BHAM (SEE MOSELEY)	THE GREEN MAN, PUTNEY HILL	FEE 5s, DEFUNCT JUNE 32	
ILFORD	MC & LCC	E	SPEED JUDGING, DINNER, TRIAL, GRASSTRACK, DANCE	MR. H.D.PAGE, 115 ALDBOROUGH RD. SEVEN KINGS	CAULIFLOWER HOTEL	FEE 7/6, ESSEX 100 TOURERS TRIAL	
ILKESTON & DISTRICT	MC & LCC	EM	TRIAL	MR. H. WHITEHEAD, 3 STATION RD. ILKESTON			
ILKLEY & DISTRICT	MC	Y	CINEMA, TRIAL, AGM, DESPATCH RIDING TRIAL, TT TRIP, CHILDREN'S DAY, SPORTING TRIAL, DINNER	MR. H. SAGAR, 5 WHINBROOK GDNS, CHAPEL ALLERTON, LEEDS	BLACK HORSE HOTEL, OTLEY	GRAND NATIONAL TRIAL, FALLING MEMBERSHIP, A RIDE OUT FOR 240 KIDS, 10/8/32 P.458	
IPSWICH	MC & CC	E	TOURING TRIAL, GRASSTRACK, NOVICE'S TRIAL, ALL NIGHT TRIAL, DINNER, AGM	MR. F.J. REVETT, CLARKSON ST. IPSWICH, MR. J.W. KNIGHT, 11 NEWSON ST. IPSWICH	GOLDEN LION	MAYOR OF IPSWICH, COMPLIMENTS M/CISTS, 30/11/32, P.120	
IRISH MOTOR RACING CLUB		I	ROAD RACE				
J.A.P	MC		RUN	MR. F. L. WILLIS, 146 HALL LANE, CHINGFORD, E4	COVENTRY HALL, PARK LANE, N17	SEVERED LINKS WITH JA.PRESTWICH. FEES 7/6 PA	
KEIGHLEY & DISTRICT	MC	Y	GRASSTRACK				
KENSAL RISE & DISTRICT	MCC	SM	NIGHT RUN, SPEED JUDGING, TRIAL, RUN TO HRD, DINNER		RED LION, BOURNE END		
KENT	MC	SE	RUN, AGM, SPEEDWAY.	MR. H.L. GIBBS, 97 - 99 HIGH ST.	COUNTY HOTEL, ASHFORD		

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
			GRASSTRACK, TRIAL	ASHFORD, KENT			
KINGSTON	MCC	SE	TRIAL, AGM, TREASURE HUNT, CAMP, RUN, NOVELTY SPEED EVENT, DANCE	MR. J.W.KNAPP, 34 CLEVEDON RD. KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES	WHITE HART HOTEL, HAMPTON WICK	ASHBY CUP TRIAL, CHAR-A-BANC TO SOUTHEND	
KINVER & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	TRIAL				
KIRKBURTON	MCC	Y	AGM	MR M. MITCHELL	ROYAL HOTEL, KIRKBURTON		
KNOCK	MCC	I	TRIAL		301 UPPER NEWTOWNARDS RD. BELFAST	HURST CUP OPEN TRIAL. MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN & AVA.	
KNOWLE & DISTRICT	MCC	WX	DINNER, RUN, PILLION TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT, GYMKHANA, SOCIAL RUN, HUNTERS MOON RUN,	MR. A.M. MARTIN, MR. R.D. COTTRELL, 114 BRYNLAND AVE. BISHOPSTON, BRISTOL	FORTTS CAFÉ		
LANCASTER & MORECAMBE	MC	NW	AGM, GRASSTRACK, SPEEDWAY,		SCALE HALL SPEEDWAY		
LEA BRIDGE SPEEDWAY	MC	NA	AGM, RUN, NOVELTY RUN, HILL CLIMB, PILLION TRIAL	MR. T. A. WISDOM, 22 ALBION RD. DALSTON, E8			
LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT	MC	SE	TRIAL, GRASSTRACK, DINNER	MR. B.H. KIMBERLEY, CHURCH ST. LEATHERHEAD	RISING SUN HOTEL, LEATHERHEAD		
LEE	MCC	I		MR. C. MOONEY, 69 ST. KEVIN'S SQ. CORK			
LEGION	MCC	NA	TRIAL, GRASSTRACK	MR M. CONNELLY, 43 PRAED ST. W2.	41 PRAED ST. W2		
LEICESTER & DISTRICT	MC	EM	AGM, TRIAL, POLO, NIGHT TRIAL	MR. L. THOMPSON, 25 LEWIN ST. LEICESTER			
LEICESTER QUERY	MC	EM	AGM, TRIAL, RUN, ROAD SENSE TEST, SCRAMBLE,	MR. H.W. LEES		80 MEMBERS, FOXTON SHEILD, ROAD SENSE, 4/5/32	
LEINSTER	MC & LCC	I	AGM, TRIAL, DINNER, ALL NIGHT TRIAL, SAND RACE, TREASURE HUNT, NOVELTY EVENT, DANCE,	MR A. ROBINSON, 191 PEARSE ST. DUBLIN	DOLPHIN HOTEL, DUBLIN	LARGEST CLUB IN CENTRE, PATLAND CUP TRIAL, NOVELTY EVENT MURDER HUNT 12/10/32 P.730	
LEVIS	AC	M	TRIAL	MR. W.S. BANNER, LEVIS WKS, STECHFORD, BHAM.		LEVIS TRIAL	
LION	MCC	NA		MR. H. GILMOUR, 107 CLARKSTON RD. CATHCART, GLASGOW, S4			
LISBURN & DISTRICT	MCC	I	TRIAL, SCRAMBLE, TREASURE HUNT, GYMKHANA, RELIABILITY TRIAL, RALLY	MR. JACK WALKER		LISBURN GRAND NATIONAL TRIAL	
LIVERPOOL	MC	CH	TRIAL, BRIDGE, GYMKHANA	MR. HARBEN, c/o VICTOR HORSMAN LTD. BOUNDARY PLACE, LIVERPOOL	REECE'S RESTAURANT, PARKER ST.	RELIANCE TRIAL, WELSH 24HR TRIAL	
LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	HILL CLIMBS, SCRAMBLES.	MR. R. J. PARKER, 5 IONIC RD.	310 KENSINGTON.	ONE MAKE CLUB	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
DOUGLAS			DANCE, SPEED JUDGING, DINNER, RUN, TROPHY TRIAL, AGM	STONCROFT, LIVERPOOL	DOUGLAS		
LONDON	MC	SM	RUN, AGM, GYMKHANA, SPEED HILL CLIMB	MR. H.D.C. SLOCUM, 62 DOYLE GDNS, HARLES DEN, NW10	RAGLAN HOTEL, 61 ST. MARTIN-LE-GRAND, EC	RUN TO DEVILS JUMPS, FEE 10/6	
LONDON ACE	MCC	NA	TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, RUN TO WOOKEY HOLE	MR. W. C. MARYWELL, 27 DE CRESPIGNY PARK, DENMARK HILL, SE5	WIMBLEDON SPEEDWAY	BYRON CUP TRIAL, FUNDS HELD: £14	
LONDON DOUGLAS	MCC	SE	DINNER, DANCE, RALLY, GYMKHANA, AGM, TREASURE HUNT, TRIAL	MR. STANLEY SUTHURS, 21 WINDERMERE AVE. KENTON MIDDIX, MR. C.W. DAVIS, 19 VICTORIA HSE. EBURY BR. SW1	THE MASONS ARMS, MADDOX ST. REGENTS ST. THE RISING SUN, EBURY BR. RD. SW1	A ONE MAKE CLUB, DOUGLAS RALLY	
LONDON EAGLE	MC	SM	ANNUAL DINNER, AGM, RUN, DANCE, TRIAL, XMAS PARTY	MR. G.H. KNIGHT, CRAMINGTON, DEREK AVE, WEMBLEY, MR. J. W. RICKARDS, 12 SPRING ST. W2.	OLD BELL RESAURANT, HOLBORN, HEATH PK. HOTEL, BOXMOOR, RED LION, RADLET	PROF. A.M. LOW (PRES) LONDON - SALISBURY TRIAL	
LONDON LADIES	MC	SE	FIXTURE, MAP READING, TRIAL, AGM, RUN, RALLY	COUNTESS OF DROGHEDA, (PRES), MISS I. M. CROW, 40 THE GROVE, STRATFORD, E15, MISS B. DEBENHAM, MISS G. LEE-MARSON, 114 CADOGAN TCE. VICTORIA PK. E9.		LADY CAMPBELL CHALLENGE CUP TRIAL, SEXISM, '1ST MAN...' RALLY AT PADDOCK TEAROOMS, WESTERHAM HILL, KENT	
LOUGHTON & DISTRICT	MC	NA	TRIAL, BIRTHDAY RUN, SURPRISE RUN, PILLION TRIAL	MR. W. CLARK, 130 MARYLAND RD. STRATFORD, E15, MR. S.B. ELLIOTT, 77 THE DRIVE, LOUGHTON, MR. J. SCHOOLING, 55 CALDERON RD. LEYTONSTONE, E.11	ROSERVILLE, HIGH BEECH		
LOUTH & DISTRICT	MCC	EM	AGM, GRASSTRACK, PILLION TRIAL	MR. CHARLES WILKINSON, 'DONNA NOOK' SUTTON ON SEA, Lincs.			
LOUTH & LINCOLNSHIRE	MCC	EM	GRASSTRACK				
MAIDSTONE	MC	NA	RACE				
MALDEN & DISTRICT	MC	SE	NEW YR PARTY, AGM, FOOTBALL, POINT TO POINT, SOCIAL RUN, TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT, SCAVENGERS RUN, MYSTERY RUN	MR. C.G. STURGESS, 629 KINGS RD. FULHAM, SW.6		5s pa FEE, SCAVENGERS RUN, COLLECT A LIST OF ARTICLES	
MALDIT COMBINE (MALDEN)	MCC	SE	TRIALS			COMBINE: A GROUP OF CLUBS CO-OPERATE FOR SPORTING PURPOSES.	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
MANCHESTER	MCC		RUN TO GALLERIES				
MANCHESTER ACE	MC	NA	DANCE		SHORROCKS PALAIS ROYAL		
MANCHESTER EAGLE	MC	CH	AGM, SAWDUST CHASE, DANCE, TRIAL.	MR. F. A. COPPER, 102 YARBURGH ST. MOSS SIDE, MANCHESTER	OGDEN ARMS HOTEL, SACKVILLE ST. GLENOUS, SHARSTON CAFÉ, SHARSTON	COMPILED A CAFÉ AND BOARDING HSE. LIST FOR MEMBERS, 14/10/32 P.605	
MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY	MC	CH	AGM, CAMPING WEEKEND, 'BIBULOUS WANDERING' FREAK HILL CLIMB, INTER UNI TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT, DANCE	W.G. GABRIEL, NORTHBROOK, WOOD LANE, TIMPERLEY. G. B. BRADLEY, J.F. HILL, J. POTTER		FREAK HILL CLIMB FOR 'NON STANDARD' MACHINES?	
MANX	MCC	IOM	AGM	REV. E. H. STENNING (PRES) MR. J. W. KING	SEFTON HOTEL, DOUGLAS		
MATLOCK	MC & LCC	EM		MR. EDWARDS		AMAL OF MATLOCK LCC AND M BATH MC	
MELKSHAM	MC	WX	M/C FOOTBALL, GRASSTRACK				
MERTHYR	MC	ESW	TRIAL	MR. G.C. PRICE, 5 STUART ST. MERTHYR TYDFIL			
MID BUCKS	MCM	SM	RUN, VISIT, TRIAL, QUERY TRIAL, DINNER & DANCE	MR. W.A. JARVIS, ELTHORNE, NIGHTINGALE RD. WENDOVER		VISIT TO MASTER SPRING FRAME WKS. FORMED IN 1930	
MID CORNWALL	MC & LCC	SW	GRASSTRACK,				
MID DERBYSHIRE	MC	EM	DINNER, PILLION TRIAL,	MR. GRAHAM WALKER	MATLOCK BATH HOTEL	BERT PERRIGO, FOWKES CUP TRIAL	
MID SURREY	AC	SE	DINNER, MAP READING, TRIAL, RELIABILITY TRIAL, SUPPER DANCE	MR. W.B. REEVE, 49 COTTERILL RD. SURBITON	THE WHITE LION HOTEL, COBHAM, BURNT STUB, CHESSINGTON		
MIDDLESBOROUGH	MC	Y	TRIAL. AGM, WHIST DRIVE, DANCE, GRASSTRACK, SPEED TRIAL, SMOKING CONCERT	MR. A. V. BUTTRESS, CLARENDON RD. MIDDLESBOROUGH		T.C.BARKER, 332 MEMBERS, LANE END FM. ACLAM GRASSTRACK, SALTBURN SANDS, SPEED TRIAL. Still exist, based at Coulby Manor, Coulby Newham, Helmington, Mboro. Catterick Hillclimb	
MIDLAND	C & AC	M	DINNER, TROPHY TRIAL			CYCLING & ATHLETIC CLUB	
MILLHOUSES (SHEFFIELD)	MC	Y	ROAD TRIAL, NUT TO CRACK RUN, DINNER, POT HOLING,	MR. L. WHITTAKER	MILLHOUSES HOTEL		
MITCHAM & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	DANCE	MR. J. A. RICHARDSON, THE CRICKETERS GARAGE, MITCHAM, SURREY	AVONDALE HALL, CLAPHAM		
MONIFIETH	MC	SC	RACE				
MONTREAL	SMCC	CAN	GYMKHANA, RALLY, GRASSTRACK				

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
MOSELEY & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	CONDUCTED HANDICAP TRIAL, NOVELTY DYE CHASE, RUN, SMOKING CONCERT, PILLION TRIAL, SCRAMBLE, MYSTERY RUN, GRASSTRACK, CAMPING WEEKEND	MR. A.W. GRACE, 17 OSBORN RD. SPARKHILL, BHAM (SEE HURLINGHAM)	THE PACK HORSE, ALCESTER RD	FEE 5s HANDICAP TRIAL RULES, 11/5/32	
MOUNTNESSING GRASSTRACK	RC	NA	GRASSTRACK, SCRAMBLE	MR. G. STIMSON, 1 THE AVENUE, HORNCHURCH, ESSEX	GEORGE & DRAGON, MOUNTNESSING		
MUSWELL HILL & DISTRICT	MCC	SM	DANCE, FANCY DRESS CARNIVAL DANCE. DINNER	MR. P. BEECHER, 472 ARCHWAY RD. N.6	THE WELLINGTON HIGHGATE, N6	MISS PADDY NAISMITH, FILM STAR JUDGED COSTUMES, 16/11/32 P.58	
NELSON GIPSY	MC	Y	AGM, SCRAMBLE, DINNER, FILM SHOW,	MR. L.M. TASKER, 161 CHAPELHOUSE RD. NELSON		LANCASHIRE GRAND NATIONAL	
NEW STOCKPORT & DISTRICT	MC & LCC	CH	RUN				
NEW YORK CROTONA	MCC	USA	MIDNIGHT RUN			REGGIE PINK, BRITISH MACHINES AGENT	
NEWCASTLE	MC	NE	ALL NIGHT RUN				
NEWCASTLE & DISTRICT	MCC	NE	GREENSIDE RACE TRACK, AGM, HILL CLIMB, TRIAL, JUNIOR TRIAL, PAPERCHASE, OVERNIGHT RUN, GRASSTRACK, SMOKING CONCERT	MR. L CHARLTON, CONSETT CHAMBERS, PILGRIM ST. NUT. SIR A.W. LAMBERT, (PRES), MR. PERCY CROSIER, c/o PERCY MOTOR CO. PERCY ST. NEWCASTLE	GRAND HOTEL, BARRAS BR.	FEE 7/6, CONSISTENCY HILL CLIMB, BAYBRIDGE, LEITH CUP, TRAVERS TROPHY TRIAL, PENNY PIE HILL, BLANCHLAND, SUTHERLAND & HUNTER TRIAL, BURNHILLS TRACK?	
NEWPORT & GWENT	MC	ESW	SUPPER, AGM, DRIVING TEST, TRIAL,	MR. A.G.E. EVANS, 69 DUCKPOOL RD. NEWPORT	TUDOR TEA RMS		
NORBURY	MC	SE	ASHBY CUP, DINNER, SOCIAL RUN, FOOTBALL, HILL CLIMB, RALLY, TREASURE HUNT	CAPT. ERIC SHORT, 17 CORNFIELD RD. EASTBOURNE, CAPT. R. TWELVETREES, (PRES) SEE 10/8/32 P.458 MR. M.C. LEWNS, 242 LOWER ADDISCOMBE RD. CROYDON.	AERODROME HOTEL, PURLEY WAY, WHITE HART, BLACKWATER	PARTY ANIMALS! ANCIENT ORDER OF THE CROOKED FOOTREST, 8/6/32	
NORTH BERKS AMATEUR	MCC	SM	TRIAL	MR.W. H. LUCAS, 81 OCK ST. ABINGDON			
NORTH BUCKS	MC	SM	DINNER	MR. H.B.G. CHESHIRE, THE LIMES, BLETCHLEY			
NORTH DERBYSHIRE	MC	Y	TREASURE HUNT, AGM, NOVELTY TRIAL, NIGHT TRIAL, DINNER	MR. ROY SAUNDERS, MR. A.J. CROPPER			
NORTH EAST LONDON	MC	SM	TRIAL, DINNER, GRASSTRACK, DANCE, STEEPLECHASE, PILLION TRIAL, NOVICE TRIAL, SPEED JUDGING.	MR 'PA' APPLEBY, 1 BLACK BOY LANE, WEST GREEN N5, MR. A.W. HUNTER, 1 BLACK BOY LANE, WEST GREEN, N15. MR. E.A. INMAN. 2	FOUNTAIN HOTEL, LOW ST. CHINGFORD	REVENGE TRIAL, COLONIAL SECTION, FREAK HILL, WATER SPLASH.	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
			TREASURE HUNT, HILL HUNTING COMP. SCRAMBLE, SKATING @ ALLY PALLY	COLCHESTER RD. LEYTON, E10			
NORTH EAST MANCHESTER	MCC	CH	AGM, TRIAL, DANCE, HANDICAP TRIAL, RUN	MR. F. FEARNLEY, (PRES) MR. C. SHERWIN, 90 BEVERLEY ST. BLACKLEY, MANCHESTER	CLARION CYCLE CLUB, PILLING ST. 10 ACRE LANE, NEWTON HEATH		
NORTH HANTS	MC	SM	SCRAMBLE, PILLION TRIAL, DINNER & DANCE	BRIGADIER-GENERAL O.C. HERBERT, CMG. MC. (PRES)	CROWN HOTEL, HARTLEY WINTNEY	ELVELTHAM ESTATE SMITH BUSTER SCRAMBLE, BRIG GEN OC HERBERT 7/12/32 P.144	
NORTH LIVERPOOL	MC	CH	AGM TRIAL, TOUR, TREASURE HUNT, TRIAL, GALA NIGHT	MR. L.T. ROGERS, c/o THE BEE CYCLE CO. UPPER NEWINGTON, LIVERPOOL, MR. J. E. WADE, 49 KREMLIN DR. STONEYCROFT, LIVERPOOL	132 BOLD ST.	SERGEANT CUP TRIAL, MOSS CUP TRIAL, WADE CUP TRIAL, LIVERPOOL - EDINBURGH - LIVERPOOL TRIAL 20/7/32 CANCELLED, POOR SUPPORT.	
NORTH LONDON	MC	SM	AGM, TRIAL, SPEEDWAY	MR. E. G. FARROW, STUDLAND, BROADFIELDS AVE. EDGEWARE		SCHOOLBOYS TRIAL	
NORTH MANCHESTER	MCC	NW	HALF DAY RUN, TRIAL, WHIST DRIVE, FAULT FINDING COMP. DANCE, 24HR SOCIAL RUN, GRAND NATIONAL	MR. J. HENTHORN, 8 STAMFORD RD. AUDENSHAW, MANCHESTER	BELLE VUE	FILLDYKE FIFTY TRIAL, THREE SHIRES, THREE HOURS TRIAL, TOURING SPEED 30 - 35MPH, ROUTE TO SCOTLAND 3/8/32 P415	
NORTH WEST LONDON	MC	SM	AGM, TRIAL, NIGHT RUN	MR. J. C. LOWE, ELMLEIGH, TENTERDEN GROVE, HENDON NW4		LONDON-GLOUCESTER TRIAL	
NORTH WILTS	MC & LCC	WX	AGM, DINNER, GRAND NATIONAL TRIAL	MR. J. T. CAVE	GODDARD ARMS HOTEL, SWINDON	MR. E.C. SKURRAY, MBE JP	
NORTH YORKS GROUP		Y	TRIAL, GROUP TRIAL				
NORTHAMPTON	MCC	SM	SUPPER DANCE, GYMKHANA, TEAM TRIAL	MR. H. J. HUMPHREYS, 10 BARING RD. NORTHAMPTON	WHITE MELVILLE HALL	WREN TROPHY TRIAL	
NORWICH VIKINGS	MCC	E	TRIAL				
NORWOOD	MC	SE	RUN, NON-STOP DANCE, TRIAL	MR. D. S. WITHERS	RAILWAY HOTEL, DARTFORD		
NOTTINGHAM	MC	EM	RUN, SECRETARY'S ROUNDABOUT, CAPTAIN'S CONUNDRUM, MAP READING, SPEED JUDGING, TRIAL, DINNER	E.R. MELLORS, 1 DAVID LANE, OLD BASFORD, NOTTINGHAM	MARSDENS CAFE	FOUNDED 1907	
NOTTINGHAM TORNADO	MC	EM	TRIAL, AGM, NIGHT TRIAL, BONFIRE	MR H.G. ONION, 20 WATKIN ST. NOTTINGHAM	ALBERT HOTEL	MOULSON CUP, BURNT AN EFFIGY OF A MOTOR BANDIT, WITH 100 TYRES, ON BONFIRE NIGHT '32	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
						(POLLUTION) 16/11/32 P.59	
OAKHAM & MELTON MOWBRAY	MCC	EM	GRASSTRACK				
OLD MID-WHITGIFTIAN	AMC	NA	RUN, AGM	MR. F.O. HOGG	BLUE ANCHOR HOTEL, STH CROYDON		
OLDHAM	MSC	NW	AGM, FREAK HILL CLIMB, TRIAL, GRASSTRACK	MR. E. HOLDEN, F28 CROSSLEY ST. ROYTON	PARK HOTEL		
OPTIMIST	MCC	SE		A.G. PENFOLD, 35 THORNE RD. SW8, MR. L.F.J. GASSON, 6 SOMERSET AVE. RAYNES PK. SE20		15 MEMBERS	
OSWESTRY & DISTRICT	MC	CH	RACES	MR. J.L. BRAYNE, 6 VICTORIA ST. OSWESTRY			
OWLS	MC	SE	GRASSTRACK	MR. A BRYANT, HOLLY BUSH LANE, SEVENOAKS, KENT			
OXFORD UNIVERSITY	CC	SM	HILL CLIMB	MR. R. A. MITCHELL, EXETER COLLEGE	KEMP HALL	INTER-VARSITY HILL CLIMB. M/CING 27/1/32 P.400 EWELME	
OXTON	MC	CH	AGM, SPORTING TRIAL, RELIABILITY TRIAL	MISS E. M. KINVIG, MR. L. WALTON, 40 OSMASTON RD. BIRKENHEAD.		SIR LESLIE SCOTT TRIAL	
P & M				MR. E.F. CHIDLEY, 77 MORTIMER ST. W1			
P. O. ENGINEERS	MC	NA	SOCIAL RUN	MR. A. E. RATCLIFFE,			
PANTHER	MCC	SE	SOCIAL RUN	MR. E.F. CHIDLEY, 77 MORTIMER ST. W.1	DEVIL'S PUNCH BOWL, HINDHEAD	NEW CLUB	
PARKHILL	MCC	SA	ALL NIGHT TRIAL				
PARSONS HEATON	MC	NE	HILL CLIMB, DINNER	MR. C.V. ROBSON, MR F.W. GARDINER, CHIEF ENGINEER		HILL CLIMB AT HUNBLETON	
PENDENNIS	MC & LCC	SW	DANCE, ROAD RACE, AGM	MR. S. DOWNING, 10 PARK TCE. FALMOUTH	ARWENACK HALL, FALMOUTH	99 MEMBERS, £19 IN FUNDS, DONATED £166 TO FALMOUTH HOSP. 28/10/32	
PERRY BARR & DISTRICT	AC	M	AGM	MR. L. F. KEMP, 6 HAZLEMERE RD. HALL GREEN, BHAM.			
PEVERIL	MCC	IOM	SPEED TRIALS, RAMSEY, PONTOON TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, RELIABILITY TRIAL, AGM			RAMSEY BAY CUP, 114 MEMBERS	
PHOENIX	MC	SM	RUN, AGM, PAPERCHASE, TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT, WHIST DRIVE, DINNER	MR. T.G. HEAD, 47 GROVE AVE, TWICKENHAM, MIDDIX	HOPE & ANCHOR HOTEL, HESTON	SOS CUP TRIAL, VISIT RAF MARINE BASE, CASHOLT, 23/3/32	
PIRATE	MCC	I	AGM, TIME KEEPING	MR. T. K. SHERIDAN, CLONASLEIGH, SHANKILL, CO. DUBLIN		'A SMALL BAND OF GENUINE ENTHUSIASTS...'	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
PIRATES	MC & CC	SM	GRASSTRACK, GRAND NATIONAL RACES	MR. A.G. HUCKLE, 95 THE DRIVE, NORTHAMPTON			
PITSMOOR, (SHEFFIELD) AND DISTRICT	MC	Y	DINNER, TRIAL, CHURCH SERVICE, DANCE, TROPHY TRIAL, PIE SUPPER, SEMI SPORTING TRIAL, AGM, XMAS PARTY	MR. H. SMITH, (PRES), MR. J.C. WORTLEY, 257 HERRIES RD. NORWOOD SHEFFIELD,	BLUE BALL INN, OUGHTBRIDGE	REV. H. EWBANK 'THE SPORTING PARSON.' CHURCH SERVICE, 21/10/32 P.632	
PLYMOUTH	MC	SW		MR. R.W. PRIOR, BUCKLAND LANE, PLYMOUTH			
PONTYPOOL & DISRICT	MC & MCC	ESW	RELIABILITY TRIAL	D. PRICE, GLENVIEW, GLASCOED, PONTYPOOL		JOHN BULL TYRE TROPHY, DESCRIPTION OF MUD: 26/10/32 P.788	
PORTSMOUTH	MC	S	HILL CLIMB, RACE, GRASSTRACK, AGM, RIDING TEST	ALDERMAN GLEAVE, (PRES), MR H. DORY	FORESTERS HALL, FRATTON RD. PORTSMOUTH	YULE KONK HILL	
POST OFFICE ENGINEERS	MC	NA	RUN				
POUNCY	MCC	S	ONE MAKE CLUB, FOLLOW MY LEADER RUN, TRIAL, HANDICAP TRIAL, SPORTING TRIAL	MR. W.R. COTTEE	POUNCY WKS, OWMERMOIGNE, DORCHESTER		
PUBLIC SCHOOLS	MC	SE	DINNER, AGM, SPEED TRIALS, BROOKLANDS	MR. S.C.H. DAVIS (PRES), SIR HENRY BIRKIN, (VP) MR. W. DARKIN, 3 HAWTHORN RD. SUTTON, SURREY			
RALEIGH	MCC	EM	AGM, WINTER TRIAL, DANCE	SIR HARRY BOWDEN, BART. (CHAIR) MR. PADDY HOLDEN, 24 DARBY DRIVE, WOLLATON PK. NOTTINGHAM	RALEIGH BALL ROOM, NOTTINGHAM		
RAVENSBURY	MCC	SE	TRIAL, NOVELTY TRIP SOCIAL, AGM, HILL CLIMB, RUN, FLANNEL DANCE,	MR. R.W. DAVIES, 24 BENNERLEY RD. CLAPHAM JUNCTION, SW11	WHITE HART, MITCHAM	MITCHAM CUP TRIAL, MEMBERS CUP TRIAL	
RAYNES PARK & DISTRICT	MC	SE	SURPRISE RUN, GEAR BOX 60 TRIAL	MR. L. AIANO, 2 HAZELHURST RD, TOOTING SW17.	RAYNES PK, GEARBOX, BLAGDON LANE, NR. SHANNON CORNER, KINGSTON BYPASS		
READING & DISTRICT	MC		AGM, TRIAL	MR. L.T.D. SAWYER, 33 - 35 LONDON ST. READING, MR. C THOMSON, c/o MESSRS ABERG & CO. 267 OXFORD RD. READING	CENTRAL CAFÉ, PACK HORSE	FORBURY CUP TRIAL, AMBLE CUP TRIAL, JEAN ROY CUP TRIAL	
RETFORD & DISTRICT	MCC	EM	RACE, GRASSTRACK,	J.W. NORTON, 29 RAGLAN RD. RETFORD, NOTTS.			
RICHMOND (YORKS)	MC	NA	RUN, RELIABILITY TRIAL,	MR. T. COOPER	FLEECE HOTEL, RICHMOND	TAN HILL	
RIMPTON	MCC	NA	GRASSTRACK				

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
RINGWOOD	MC & LCC	S	GRASSTRACK, TRIAL, SCRAMBLE	MR. H. MINCHINTON, 'GLEN ROY' FAIRLIE EST. RINGWOOD, HANTS.		'TINK' BRYANT, CLUB MASCOT	
ROBIN SPORTING	MC	SE	AGM	MR. F. COARD, 27 WALLER RD. NEW CROSS, LONDON SE14		T.H. BARKER, (VPRES)	
ROCHDALE & DISTRICT	MC	NW	AGM, TRIAL, SOCIAL RUN, SCRAMBLE, GRASSTRACK	MR. J.J. ATKINSON		HIGGINBOTTOM TRIAL	
ROCHESTER CHATHAM & DISTRICT	MC	NA	AGM, TROPHY TRIAL, ALL NIGHT TRIAL, GYMKHANA, CAPTAINS SURPRISE RUN			ALL NIGHT TRIAL ROUTE, 12/10/32 P.730, 'BOMBING' OF A CAR @ GYMKHANA, 26/10/32 P.788a	
ROMFORD & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	GRASSTRACK, HILL CLIMB, PILLION TRIAL, AGM	MR. G.H. WILSON, 119 GEORGE ST. ROMFORD, MR. C. BIRCH		FEE 5s	
ROTHERHAM & DISTRICT	MC	Y	DINNER, SOLO SPORTING TRIAL, GYMKHANA, SCRAMBLE, HILL CLIMB, DANCE, RUN	THE MAYOR ALDERMAN G. E. CAINE(VP) MR. S. ROGERS, c/o WHITAKERS, DALTON, ROTHERHAM.		MISS P. RANDALL	
ROYAL ASCOT	MCC	SM	AGM, DINNER, TRIAL, HILL CLIMB	MR. E.R. GOODCHILD, PROVIDENCE COTTS, SOUTH ASCOT, BERKS	THE WELLS HOTEL, ASCOT		
RUDGE	MCC	SC	TRIAL				
SALOP	MC	M	AGM, GRASSTRACK	MR. H. SHIELDS	OLD POST OFFICE INN		
SARUM & DISTRICT	MC & CC	S	SCRAMBLE, DINNER, TRIAL, MIDNIGHT TRIAL, ROAD RACE	MR. R. L. HARRY, 52 DEVIZES RD. SALISBURY		CHAIRMAN'S CUP TRIAL	
SCUNTHORPE	MCC	EM	NIGHT TRIAL	MR. P.PARKER			
SHEFFIELD	MC	Y	DINNER, TRIAL, MIDNIGHT TRIAL, GYMKHANA	MR. G. POTTS			
SHEFFIELD & HALLAMSHIRE	MC	Y	AGM, RAMBLING & CAVING, TRIAL	MR. L. E. B. WARNER		RAMBLING ETC. 27/4/32	
SHEFFIELD ACE	MC	Y					
SHENSTONE & DISTRICT	MCC	M	ROAD RACE				
SHEPTON MALLET	MC	WX	FOOTBALL, GRASSTRACK				
SHIREBROOK	MCC	NA	GYMKHANA		WHITE SWAN GROUND		
SHIRLEY & DISTRICT	MC	M	SPORTING TRIAL	MR. V. NORTON 366 STRATFORD RD. SPARKHILL, BHAM			
SIDCUP & DISTRICT	MCC	SE	RUN, CONDUCTED NOVELTY TRIAL, CARNIVAL, GRASSTRACK, SEMI SPORTING TRIAL, GYMKHANA, DINNER & DANCE,	MR. N.C.SMITH, FORGE HSE, HIGH ST. FOOTS CRAY, SIDCUP	BULL HOTEL, CHISELHURST	ANKLE JUDGING COMP. O'DONNELL TRIAL, FEE 5s & 3/6 FOR CLUB BADGE	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
SITTINGBOURNE & DISTRICT	MC	SE	GRASSTRACK, GYMKHANA, M/C FOOTBALL, NIGHT TRIAL	E.R. WALKER, 3 ADDINGTON RD. SITTINGBOURNE			
SKERRIES	MCC	I	AT HOME, TRIAL	MR. P. MURTAGH		DUBLIN	
SOUTH DOWNS	MCC	SE	SCRAMBLE, GYMKHANA, AGM,	MR. W. BOTTIN, MR. W.R. BEAMISH		HE MAN'S RACE, SURF RIDING, MECHANICAL MARTHA	
SOUTH ESSEX	MC	NA			EMPRESS HALL, RIPPLE RD. BARKING		
SOUTH LIVERPOOL	MC	CH	TRIAL, CONDUCTED TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, GYMKHANA, MYSTERY TRIAL, DINNER	MR. H.R. ATHERLEY, 61 LYTTLETON RD. AIGBURTH	TOWN GREEN, BEARS PAW		
SOUTH READING	MCC	SE	TRIAL, DINNER, SPEEDWAY, GRASSTRACK, SPORTING SOLO TRIAL, PILLION TRIAL, CAMPING WEEKEND, M/C FOOTBALL, STEEPLECHASE, DANCE	MR. R. JOHNSON, 36 MILMAN RD. READING. MR. W. CLINCH, 7 HENRY ST. READING	WELLINGTON ARMS, WHITLEY ST.	THREE MUSKETEERS SOLO TRIAL. DR. S. GILFORD, PRESIDENT'S TROPHY TRIAL	
SOUTH SHIELDS & DISTRICT	MC	NE	AGM, RUN, HARE & HOUNDS	MR. HILTON PARK, (PRES)			
SOUTH SHIELDS & PARSON'S WKS.	MC	NE	TRIAL				
SOUTH YORKS GROUP		Y	GYMKHANA, GROUP TRIAL, HILL CLIMB				
SOUTHAMPTON	MC	S		MR. C.R. JENKIN		AMAL OF SOUTHAMPTON ACE AND S. DISTRICT MCC, FEB 1932	
SOUTHEND & DISTRICT	MC & CC	E	ALL NIGHT TRIAL, TT TRIP, PICNIC & REGATTA, TREASURE HUNT		VICTORIA CORNER		
SOUTHERN	MCC	NA		MR. H. MUNCER, MR. B.H.KING, 66 CHANNEL VIEW RD. EASTBOURNE	QUEENS PK HOTEL, BOURNEMOUTH		
SOUTHERN & DISTRICT	LC & MCC	E					
SOUTHERN AMATEUR	MCC	NA	TRIAL, SECRETARYS RAMBLE, FOOTBALL, NOVICES TRIAL, DISCUSSION NIGHT, PILLION TRIAL, SAND RIDING, SOCIAL RUN, NIGHT RUN, TREASURE HUNT, HILL CLIMB, RELIABILITY TRIAL, DANCE	MR. H. PADDINGTON, 56 KINGSWOOD RD. WIMBLEDON, SW9, MR. B. FISHER, 55 ATHELDENE RD. EARLSFIELD, S.W	YE OLDE BARNE, KINGSTON RD. WIMBLEDON	'COLOURS' SAMSEE TRIAL	
SOUTHERN OBSERVERS	MCC	NA		MR. E.G. BREWIN, 25 MONTEFIORE RD. HOVE.			
SOUTHGATE & DISTRICT	MCC	SM	NOVELTY EVENT, DANCE	MR. A.C. FITZGERALD	THE CHERRY TREE, OLD SOUTHGATE		

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
SOUTHGATE & DISTRICT	MCC	SM	NOVELTY RUN, DANCE		CHERRY TREE INN		
SOUTHPORT	MC	NW	100 MILE RACE			SOUTHPORT SANDS	
SPALDING & DISTRICT	MCC	EM	RUN, GRASSTRACK	MR. J. DRAPER			
SPENNYMOOR	MC	NE				DISBANDED APRIL 1932, DUE TO FALLING MEMBERSHIP	
SPORTS (MONTREAL)	MCC	CAN	AGM, SPRING TRIAL	MR. T. MCGRAIL		MR. R. F. MAGGS, ED. OF THE CANADIAN MOTORCYCLIST	
SPOT	AC	NA	RUNS, PAPERCHASE, RELIABILITY TRIAL, SCAVENGING COMPETITION, SPEED JUDGING		SPOT RESTAURANT, LONDON COLNEY, ST. ALBANS		
ST. ALBANS & DISTRICT	AC	SM	TRIAL, GRASSTRACK, MYSTERY RUN	MISS I. P. RANDELL	GOLDEN LION INN, LONDON COLNEY	HUTCHINSON HUNDRED, COMMITTEE CUP TRIAL	
ST. AUSTELL	MC	SW	AGM, SPEEDWAY, TRIAL, GRASSTRACK,	MR. D.C. SHORT, NUNS TALON, NR. BODMIN, CORNWALL		2/6 PA 100 MEMBERS	
STAMFORD	MCC	EM	TRIAL, DINNER	MR. J.W.E. HAWLEY, 2 ST. MARY'S ST. STAMFORD			
STAMFORD BRIDGE SPEEDWAY	MC	SM	HILL CLIMB, SPEED JUDGING, SOCIAL RUN, GYMKHANA, TRIP TO FRANCE, DANCE	MR. S.W. BERWICK, 2 KNEBWORTH RD. N16. MR. C BRADLEY, 1 STEYNE RD. ACTON W.	THE BETTER 'OLE, PUB, GREAT WEST RD.		
STAMFORD HILL & DISTRICT	MC	NA		MR. A.G. DUCK, GROVE GARAGE, GROVE LANE STAMFORD	GROVE GARAGE	NEW CLUB	
STOCKSFIELD & DISTRICT	MC	NA	RELIABILITY TRIAL, HILL CLIMB				
STOCKTON & DISTRICT	MC	Y	GYMKHANA, TRIAL, GRASSTRACK, DANCE			HAL DENHAM'S RHYTHM ACES	
STOKE ON TRENT & DISTRICT	MCC	M	TRIAL	MR. H. GEORGE, 15 LAWTON ST. BURSLEM, STOKE ON TRENT			
STRATFORD ON AVON	MC & LCC	M	DANCE, DINNER, TRIAL	MR. J. GIBBS		FEE 2/6	
STREATHAM & DISTRICT	MCC	SE	TEAM TRIAL, DINNER, SCRAMBLE, DANCE, HILL CLIMB, NOVICES TRIAL, CARNIVAL DANCE, SUPPER	MR. N.F. FOWLER, MR. J.A.G. MESSENGER, 240 MERTON RD. WIMBLEDON, MR. H.W. LOUIS, 23 LYSIA'S RD. BALHAM, SW12	SAND ROCK HOTEL, SHIRLEY, BUGLE INN, UPPER HALLIFORD	REVENGE CUP TRIAL, WILLIAMS CUP TRIAL, SEE 23/11/32 P.87 FOR REVUE OF SOCIAL EVE.	
STROUD	MC & LCC	W	AGM, MC FOOTBALL			WOUND UP MARCH 1932	
SUNBEAM	MCC	SE	TRIAL, PIONEER RUN, SCRAMBLES, TEA FIGHT, SPEED TRIAL, DANCE.	MR. F.W. PINHARD, 3 WAVERTREE RD. SW2	THE GEORGE, WINCHCOMBE	CLOSED & INVITATION TRIAL, ORGANISERS OF PIONEER RUN.	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
			RALLY,			GATWICK SPEEDCOURSE, 200 TRIAL, SOUTHERN EXPERTS TRIAL	
SUTTON (SURREY)	MCC	SE	NY PARTY, DINNER, TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT, MAN HUNT, RUN, BOAT RACE, GRASSTRACK	MR. H.A. TRUELOVE, (PRES)	BARLEY MOW, BETCHWORTH, GREYHOUND HOTEL, SUTTON	PRESIDENTS CUP TRIAL	
SUTTON COLDFIELD & NTH BHAM	AC	M	TRIAL, 24 HR TRIAL, VETERAN RUN, AGM	MR. J. D. WOODHOUSE, 10 WARWICK CHAMBERS, CORPORATION ST. BHAM		SPEEDS FOR VET RUN, P.788 26/10/32	
SUTTON-IN-ASHFIELD	MC		DINNER				
SWANSEA	MC	WSW	AGM, LUDO CHALLENGE MATCH, TRIALS, HILL CLIMB, SPORTING RUN, GRASSTRACK, TREASURE HUNT, DINNER & DANCE	MR. E. A. FOX, 60 KILVEY TCE. SWANSEA	GORE HSE HOTEL	FEE 7/6 CAMBRIAN TRIAL	
SWINDON & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	SOCIAL RUN, TREASURE HUNT, PILLION TRIAL	MR. H. GRAINGER, 24 ORIEL ST. SWINDON	THE IRON BUILDING, DORES RD. UPPER STRATTON	45 MEMBERS, 'NOT INCLUDING THE LADIES' 28/10/32	
SYDENHAM	MC	SE	AGM, TREASURE HUNT, GRAND PRIX, TROPHY TRIAL,	MR. S.F.ROTHON, ST.MARY'S, WHITE HORSE HILL, W. CHISELHURST, KENT	GREYHOUND HOTEL, SYDENHAM	MEMBERSHIP 125 WITH 30 HONORARY WOMEN. WOMEN NOT FULL MEMBERS?	
TALLAGHT & DISTRICT	MCC	I	TRIAL, STEEPLECHASE, GO AS YOU PLEASE TRIAL	MR. A. HARRISON, 17 TERENURE PK. TERENURE, DUBLIN, MR. C. H. MANDERS, 24 LOWER PEMBROKE ST. DUBLIN, MR. J.G. BIRNLEY, 67a PIERCE S. DUBLIN		MANDERS CUP TRIAL, GO AS YOU PLEASE, SEE 14/12/32 P.177	
TALLY HO!	MCC / AC	SM	AGM, CARNIVAL DANCE,	MR. E.W. GREEN, 26 BUXTED RD. FRIERN BARNET N.12	THE BLACK BULL, HIGH RD. WHETSTONE	BECAME AC IN JULY 32	
TAMWORTH & DISTRICT	MCC	M	ROAD RACE				
TASMANIA	MCC	TA	TRIAL, FLYING 1/4 MILE SPEED EVENT			SEVEN MILE BEACH	
TAUNTON	MC	SW	TRIAL, AGM	MR. C. C. ALLEN	CASTLE HOTEL	CHALLENGE CUP TRIAL	
TEWKSBURY & DISTRICT	MC	W	SCRAMBLE				
THAMES DISTRICT	MC	SM	TRIAL, DANCE,		BELL & BOTTLE HOTEL, NR. MAIDENHEAD		
THAMES SIDE	MCC	NA	TRIAL				
THANET	MC	SE	DINNER, GRASSTRACK, RUN, AGM	A & B GARAGE, GRANGE RD. RAMSGATE, MR. R. RAYNER, 10 GROSVENOR PLACE, MARGATE.		FEE 5s + 1/6 TO ACU, FORMED 1926	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
THE CHALFONTS & DISTRICT	AC	SM	NOVELTY TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT, RODEO & GYMKHANA, SCRAMBLE, CARNIVAL DANCE	MR. L. J. MUSLIN, 15 NARCOT RD. CHALFONT ST. GILES, BUCKS			
THE DITTONS	MC	SE	DINNER & DANCE, AGM, NIGHT RUN, TRIAL	MR. J.D. WARD, 4 COBHAM RD. KINGSTON	WHITE HART, BLACKWATER, NR. CAMBERLEY		
THE MOTOR CYCLING CLUB		NT	LONDON-EXETER TRIAL, ANNUAL DINNER & DANCE	MR. J.F. CRUNDALL, 236a LANCASTER RD. LONDON, W11		PARK LANE HOTEL ANNUAL DINNER & DANCE, 5/11/32 TICKETS 12/6, SEE 16/11/32 P.59	
THE OWLS	MC	SE	AGM, OBIT 4/5 GRASSTRACK	MR. G. ADAMS		EST. 1926. OXTED, WESTERHAM & LIMPSFIELD MC&LCC STILL EXIST.	
TORBAY	MC	SW	RELIABILITY TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, GRASSTRACK, DANCE, LOSE 'EM RUN		ST. JAMES HOTEL		
TORNADO	MC	EM	BALL	MR. G. ONIONS			
TOTNES & DISTRICT	MCC	SW	EASTER TRIAL	MR. J. POWER, 10 PLYMOUTH RD. TOTNES			
TOTTENHAM & DISTRICT	MCC	SM	AGM, MC FOOTBALL, SCRAMBLE,	MR. E.B. HOWLETT, 5 MAUD RD. LEYTON, E10	ANGEL HOTEL, EDMONTON	MEET MONS AND THURS 8PM	
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	MC	SE	TRIAL	W.B. JURY, 73 CAMDEN RD. TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT			
TWICKENHAM & DISTRICT	MCC	NA		MR. A.J. FRAZER			
ULSTER	MCC	I	AGM	MR. H. H. PALMER	GRAND CENTRAL HOTEL, BELFAST		
UNY LELANT & DISTRICT	MC	NA	AGM, TRIAL, GYMKHANA, HILL CLIMB, DANCE		HARRYS GARAGE, LELANT		
URMSTON	MC	NW	AGM, NOVICE TRIAL, TREASURE HUNT	MR. E.K. ROBERTS, 157 LLOYD ST. GREENHAYS MANCHESTER	VICTORIA HOTEL, URMSTON		
V.W.H. CIRENCESTER	MC	NA	DANCE	MR. F.G HUCK, DR. KING-TURNER, (PRES)	CIRENCESTER		
VERGAL	AC	E		MR. P. HYMAS, 23 LONDON RD. CHELMSFORD	LION & LAMB HOTEL, DUKES ST. CHELMSFORD		
VICKERS-ARMSTRONG-WHITWORTH	MC	NE	RUN, AGM, TRIAL,	MR. B. F. TREE, MESSRS ARMSTRONG WHITWORTH LTD. SCOTTWOOD WKS. NUT.		CLEVELAND TRIAL	
WARRINGTON & DISTRICT	MCC	NA	AGM, TRIAL,	MR. W. TWISS, 114 WILDERSPOON CAUSEWAY, WARRINGTON	PARR HALL	BOOKED PLANE TO TT	
WATERFORD & TRANMORE	MRC	I	SAND RACE,	MR. W. J. HENDERSON, 4 HENRY ST.			

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
				WATERFORD			
WATERLOO & DISTRICT	MC	NW	HILL CLIMB, BALL, PAPERCHASE, DANCE, SPEED TRIAL, MYSTERY TRIAL, SOCIAL RUN, SPORTING TRIAL, GRASSTRACK, MINIATURE TT, SOCIAL TRIAL, RELIABILITY TRIAL	MR. H.M. CHIPCHASE, 2 LODGE, THORNTON WOOD, GREAT CROSBY, MR A.H. ATKINSON, 356 LONGMOOR LANE, FAZAKERLEY, LIVERPOOL	GRAPES HOTEL, THORNTON	POOR & CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S DAY OUT WITH TOC H, 14/10/32 P.606	
WATERLOOVILLE & DISTRICT	MC & LCC	S	TRIAL, SOCIAL RUNS, DINNER, GRASSTRACK, GYMKHANA,	REV. E. BRUCE-CORNFORD, (PRES), MR. E.N.L. GUYMER, 11 KINGS RD. SOUTHSEA, HANTS.	KIMBELL'S CAFÉ, SOUTHSEA	REVENGE TRIAL	
WATFORD & DISTRICT	AC	SM	AGM, TRIAL, RACING, SOCIAL, M/C FOOTBALL, GRASSTRACK	MR. R. K. MATHESON, 40 BRUCE GROVE, WATFORD, MR. DOUGLAS NICHOLSON, 269 ST. ALBANS RD. WATFORD	THE HUMMING BIRD, WATFORD-ST. ALBANS RD.	CHILTERN HUNDRED TRIAL	
WATLING	MCC	SM	TRIAL, SOCIAL RUN, GYMKHANA, DEBATING EVENING,, TREASURE HUNT, SHERLOCK HOLMES RUN,		RICHARD'S GARAGE, WHITE LION, EDGEWARE	CAPTAINS CUP TRIAL, SV V OHV, 12/10/32	
WELLINGBOROUGH & DISTRICT	MC	SM	GRASSTRACK, FLANNEL DANCE, TRIAL, DINNER	MR. E. W. WARD, ROSEMOUNT, NEST LANE, WELLINGBOROUGH			
WEMBLEY & DISTRICT	MC	SM	AGM	SIR MALCOLM CAMPBELL, (PRES), MR. L. R. ELLIS, 5 SUDBURY PARADE, WEMBLEY.		SIR MALCOLM CAMPBELL	
WEMBLEY SPEEDWAY SPORTS	MC	NA	RUN, FLIRTATION RUN, POLO, SOCIAL RUN, TRIAL, GYMKHANA		SWAN & BOTTLE, UXBRIDGE	LIGHT HAWK PRESENTATION RUN	
WEST EALING	MCC	NA	DANCE, TRIAL,	MR W.J. HEALEY, 33 DEVON WAY, HESTON MIDDX	PARK HOTEL HANWELL	CLARK CUP TRIAL	
WEST HAM SPEEDWAY	MC	NA	TRIAL, RALLY, GRASSTRACK, AGM	MR. R. MORTON, THE STADIUM, CUSTOM HOUSE, E16	THE DUKES HEAD, BARKING RD.	ELVIN CHALLENGE SHEILD TRIAL.	
WEST KENT	MC	SE	DANCE, AGM, TRIAL,	MR. F. WILSON SMITH, SOUTH VIEW, MEADOW WAY, FARNBOROUGH		WILSON CUP TRIAL, DARMOOR TRIAL	
WEST MIDDLESEX AMATEUR	MCC	SM	TREASURE HUNT, TOUR, TRIAL, SCRAMBLE, TT.RUN, CAPTAINS RUN, AGM, RALLY, DINNER	MR. G.S. HADFIELD, PALERMO, ALBANY PK. RD. KINGSTON, 89 GORDON RD. W5. MR. G.C. HICKMAN, 7 TRING AVE. W.5 A.M. LOWE, (PRES)	IRON BRIDGE, HANWELL	TWOSOME TRIAL, CLUB MAG. 'SWASTIKA GAZETTE' TT VISIT, GUESTS OF MAYOR OF EALING, 4/9/32, P516 & 605, RULES TO CAPTS RUN, 9/11/32, P.27	
WEST OF ENGLAND	MC	SW	SCRAMBLE, TRIAL, HILL CLIMB, SPORTING TRIAL.	MRS. M.L. ANNING, TOR HILL, KINGSTEINTON.		YEOVIL TO LANDS END TRIAL, FOUNDED 1925	

NAME	CLUB TYPE	ACU CENTRE	EVENT TYPES	CONTACT	CLUBHOUSE	NOTES	*
			GRASSTRACK, DINNER	NEWTON ABBOT			
WESTERN MANX	MCC	NA	RELIABILITY TRIAL,		PEEL		
WEYBRIDGE	MSC	SE	DANCE, AGM, SOCIAL RUN, TRIAL, NIGHT TRIAL, DINNER	MR. G. BISHOP, MR. U. JONES, THE ROW BARGE INN, WOKING, SURREY	BRIDGE HOTEL, CHERTSEY, BYFLEET VILLAGE HALL, 2s	FEE, 7s 6d then 5s per yr	
WEYMOUTH & SOUTH DORSET	MCC	NA	RUN, DANCE, NOVICES CONDUCTED TRIAL	MR. A.G. RATTI	BETT'S GARAGE, RADIPOLE, WEYMOUTH		
WICKHAM	MC	SE	SUPPER, AGM, TRIAL, PAPERCHASE, CONDUCTED TRIAL, SCRAMBLE, SOLO CHAMPIONSHIP	MR. V.E.L. PETTY	BLUE ANCHOR, SOUTH CROYDON, THE GOAL, CUDHAM, KENT	SUNBEAM SOLO TRIAL, FEE 6/6 PER YR	
WIGAN	A & MCC	NW	ALL NIGHT RUN,		THE SERVICE HSE, MESNES RD. WIGAN		
WILLESDEN & DISTRICT	MCC	SM	TRIAL TREASURE HUNT, DANCE	MR. J.H. CHASE, 55 HUDDLESTONE RD. NW2			
WINCHESTER	MC	S	RACE				
WIRRAL HUNDRED	MC	CH	DINNER, AGM, TRIAL, RUN, PILLION TRIAL,	MR. A. MALLINSON	HULME HALL, PORT SUNLIGHT	SPRING TRIAL, THORNTON MANOR, LORD LEVERHULME, 25/5/32	
WITLEY & DISTRICT	MCC	SE	TRIAL, AGM, GYMKHANA	MR. F. R. HOLT, BROOK NR. ALBURY, SURREY	THE GRANTLEY ARMS, WONERSH		
WOOD GREEN & DISTRICT	MC	SM	RUN, AGM, EASTER RUN TO LOWESTOFT, TRIAL, DANCE, TREASURE HUNT, NOVICES TRIAL, RUN TO VINCENT WKS. DINNER	GRAHAM W. WALKER (PRES), MR. S. J. BARNES, 44 PARK RD. HARRINGAY N. MR. A.B. NEWTON, 30 MIDDLEHAM RD. EDMONTON N18	WHITE HART HOTEL, ALEXANDRA PALACE, CROWN HOTEL, AMERSHAM	BACHELORS RUN, PALEY CUP TRIAL, FORMED 1924, FLORENCE RESTAURANT	
WORKSOP TIGERS	MCC	NA		MR. H. C. ROWSON, ANSTON AVE. WORKSOP		NEW CLUB	
WYCOMBE	MC	NA	RUN, PAPER CHASE		BLUE ANCHOR, STH. CROYDON		
WYE VALLEY	AC	W	OPEN RELIABILITY TRIAL, PAPERCHASE				
YEOVIL	MC	SW	TRIAL, DANCE		WHITE POST GARAGE, WEST COKER RD. 'QUIET WOMAN' HOUSTOCK	A DISPLAY OF OVER 200 MEDALS AND 70 CUPS OF PAST SUCCESSES AT DINNER 14/12/32 P. 176	
YORK	MC	Y	GRASSTRACK				

Appendix 4.

List of Sporting Events and Variants.

This data was obtained from perusal of contemporary journals and oral testimonies. It is intended to provide a picture of diversity of activities within the sport.

CLUB-ORGANISED SPORTING ACTIVITIES

This is a by no means exhaustive list of the various activities organised and undertaken by motor clubs in the inter-war period. Included is a brief description, and where available, rules. These activities may or may not have been run under the auspices of the Auto Cycle Union.

American Hill Climb. An event where it was almost impossible to get to the top of the hill. Also known as a Freak hill climb.

Camping Weekend. Similar to a rally. A social event where members of the club meet and camp, usually at a venue of some interest. Other clubs might be invited, and light-hearted sporting events take place.

Fault-finding. According to *Vickers News* in which the Vickers Armstrong Whitworth Motor Club contributed, 'Committee members were to make "Various derangements" to the competitors engines,' which they were to find and correct.¹

Grasstrack. This was the forerunner of the contemporary sport of motocross. A field was converted into a rudimentary racetrack. The emphasis was on speed rather than manoeuvrability as in trials. Races were for several laps or for a set time, plus 1 lap.

Gymkhana. Run along similar lines as the equestrian event, riders took their machines over obstacles such as ramps, had relay races, or other light-hearted events, with the emphasis on fun rather than competition. Sometimes used as a spectator sport to promote motorcycling at diverse venues such as county shows.

Hill Climb. Designed to test the skill of the rider and stamina of the machine. The summer was generally accepted as the season for events such as these.

Motorcycle football. Under the ACU rules, this game had six riders on each team, used an Association-sized football, and was played 15 minutes each way.²

Obstacle race. Example of rules: Ride 50yds. Bite from a suspended apple. Ride 20yds. Stop engine. Run 30yds to coats. Put them on. Return to bike. Start it. Return to start. Take another bite of apple.³

Pillion Trial. A trial where the machine must carry a pillion passenger as well as the rider. The competitors rode their machines over a set route, with closely monitored difficult sections where marks could be lost for footing, (putting a foot down), stopping or stalling the engine. Marks were lost rather than gained.

Rally. A camping event, involving other clubs as well as the host club. Getting to the campground is part of the event. It was an opportunity for the clubman or woman to explore

¹ *Vickers News* Aug 1931 p.82

² E. Crust, *At the Drop of the Flag* (Middlesbrough, 2005) p.47.

³ *Vickers News* Aug 1932 p.86

new areas of the countryside whilst riding as part of a group. Trophies to be given for best turned out machine, club turnout, and silly games.

Reliability Trial. This involved riding possibly hundreds of miles over varied terrain. Manufacturers often used these events as testing grounds for their products. The positive propaganda of a victory in them was an aid to sales, and reveals what the interwar rider required from a machine. Long distance trials started in about September to February or March at the worst time of year. Which was why they were classed as reliability trials.

Route-finding. In this event, speedometers were blanked out. Destinations were given and the competitor proceeded to them estimating a time averaging 20mph. The winner is the competitor whose route most nearly matches the designated one.⁴

Sand Race. A circuit race organised at a location with a suitably sized beach. Two popular venues were Redcar in the North East of England and Pendine in Wales.

Solo blindfold race. Run in heats of four. Competitors placed N.S.E.W. of a flag equidistant from each. Bikes face away from flag. Blindfolded, they ride off to estimated position of flag. The nearest competitor wins.⁵

Speed Trial. Similar to the above event, with entrants being required to complete sections of the course at set average speeds.

Sprint. An event in which a measured length of road is to be travelled in the shortest possible time. This usually meant a short length of private driveway, usually with an incline, where rider's times were measured with a stopwatch.

Treasure Hunt. Clues to the object to be found were hidden at points along a route. The winner was the first to find the object. These events were usually light-hearted and less competitive.

⁴ *Vickers News* Dec 1930 p. 261

⁵ *Vickers News* Aug 1932 p.86

Appendix 5.

Club designations. These are taken from the club events pages of the weekly journal, *Motor Cycling* during 1932. They show the range and diversity of motorcycle clubs in existence during this period.

Club types and the frequency of their mention in the journal for the year 1932:

1. No designation: 17 Examples of this type of club are in the Association of Pioneer Motorcyclists, which was not as its title might suggest, a group of ancient decrepit ladies and gentlemen, but owners and riders of machines dating from the dawn of the movement.⁶ The Association of Unaffiliated Clubs also fits into this category, as it catered for all types of clubs not under the auspices of the ACU.
2. A & MCC 1. Auto and Motor Cycle Club. This form of club catered for the motorist in general, as did several other types. There was no particular bias towards motorcycle ownership.
3. AC 14. Auto Club. Again a form of club not specifically catering for a particular type of vehicle.
4. AMC 1. Auto Motor Club.
5. C & AC 1. Car and Auto Club.
6. CC 1. Car Club.
7. LC & MCC 1. Light Car and Motor Cycle Club.
8. M & MCC 1. Motor & Motor Cycle Club.
9. MC 168. Motor Club. The majority of clubs found in the sample were of this type and catered for all forms of motor vehicle.
10. MC & CC 9. Motor Club & Car Club.
11. MC & LCC 30. Motor Club & Light Car Club.
12. MC & MCC 2. Motor Club & Motor Cycle Club.

⁶ See club database.

13. MCC 130. Motor Cycle Club. The second most frequent type of club in the sample, catering specifically for motorcycles. The notable exception to this being the Motor Cycling Club.
14. MCC & AC 1. Motor Cycle Club & Auto Club.
15. MCM 1. Unknown designation.
16. MRC 1. Motor Racing Club.
17. MSC 3. Motor Sport Club.
18. POMC 1. An unknown designation, probably referring to a specific make of machine or perhaps Post Office. The Post Office engineers had a non-ACU affiliated club mentioned in the database.
19. RC 1. Racing Club.
20. SMCC 1. Sporting Motor Cycle Club.

Appendix 6.

Auto Cycle Union regional centres. The areas covered by the centres are specified in the *Official Pocket Book of the Auto-Cycle Union, 1933*. The number of affiliated clubs corresponding in *Motor Cycling* during 1932 are quantified.

ACU Centres:

1. CAN. Canada. 3. Canada had two recognised ACU centres, based in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario.
2. CH. Cheshire. 17. Area: Cheshire.
3. E. Eastern. 10. Area: Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.
4. EM. East Midlands. 23. Area: Derby, Nottingham, Lincoln, Leicester, and Rutland.
5. ESW. East South Wales. 6. Area: Radnor, Brecknock, Monmouth, and eastern section of Glamorgan.
6. I. Ireland. 16. Area: Ireland was controlled by the Motor Cycle Union of Ireland, based in Belfast.
7. IOM. Isle of Man. 2. Area: The whole of the island.
8. M. Midland. 18. Area: Shropshire, Stafford, Warwickshire and Worcestershire (except Southern section).
9. N. Northern. 1. Area: Cumberland, Westmoreland, and northern section of Lancashire.
10. NE. North Eastern. 8. Area: Northumberland and Durham.
11. NT. None Territorial. 4. These were national clubs such as the British Two Stroke Club.
12. NW. North Western. 15. Area: Lancashire (except northern section).
13. S. Southern. 11. Area: Berkshire, Hampshire, Dorset, and southern section of Wiltshire.
14. SC. Scotland. 11. The Scottish ACU was based in Glasgow.

15. SE. South Eastern. 55. Area: Kent, Surrey, and Sussex.
16. SM. South Midland. 48. Area: Northampton, Cambridge, Bedford, Oxford, Buckingham, Hertford, and Middlesex.
17. SW. South Western. 11. Area: Devon, Cornwall, and southern section of Somerset.
18. TA. Tasmania. 1. Area: The whole of the island.
19. USA. United States of America. 1. This entry was made by Reggie Pink, an agent for British machines in Crotona, New York.
20. W. Western. 5. Area: Hereford, southern section of Worcester, and northern section of Gloucester.
21. WSW. West South Wales. 3. Cardigan, Pembroke, Carmarthen, Brecknock, and western section of Glamorgan.
22. WX. Wessex. 9. Southern section of Gloucester, northern sections of Somerset and Wiltshire.
23. Y. Yorkshire. 26. Area: Yorkshire.

Appendix 7.

List of Typical Motoring Offences.

The data for this appendix was taken from documents held at Durham County Records Office, concerning magistrate court activities during the period, (Ps/Da/B5 to B13). These illustrate the stage of development which motoring law had reached by this time.

Motoring offences dealt with by magistrates:

These are dealt with under the 1930 Road Traffic Act 20 & 21 Geo. 5 unless otherwise stated.

Lights. (usually dealt with under the Road Transport Lighting Act of 1927 or Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations, 1929.)

Number plate. (Motor Car Act, 1903.)

Licence. (Section 4.)

Dangerous driving. (Section 11.)

Obstructing highway. (Highways Act, 1835, section 72.)

Failure to stop. (Section 20.)

Inadequate silencing. (The Motor Vehicle, (Construction and Use) Regulations, 1931, Reg. 16.)

General licence. (Road Vehicles, (Registration and Licensing) Regulations, 1921.) Used when a limited amount of vehicles for which the licence is valid, is exceeded.

Failure to sound horn. (The Motor Vehicle, (Construction and Use) Regulations, 1931, Reg. 73.)

No tax. (Roads Act, 1920 Section 5.)

Failure to notify of ownership change. (Road Vehicle (Registration & Licensing) Regulations, 1924, Article 9.)

Brakes. (The Motor Vehicle, (Construction and Use) Regulations, 1931, Regs. 41 & 45.)

Drunk in charge. (Section 15.)

Careless driving. (Section 12.)

Pillion carrying. (Section 16.)

None specific. (These were included in later magistrates records and are an indication of an increase in court time being taken up in such matters.)

No Insurance. (Third party insurance required in 1930 under Part II of the Act).

Appendix 8.

List of Fines For Motoring Offences.

This data was obtained from the same source as the previous appendix, and illustrates the apparent importance placed on certain offences by the discretion of the magistrate.

**Common Fines for Motoring Offences, At
Darlington Magistrates, 1928.**

Lights: (Usually two separate fines for front and rear.) 4/-; 10/or 7 days in prison; 15/- or 10 days.

Number Plate: 4/-; 6/-.

Licence: 4/-; 10/- or 7 days.

Dangerous Driving: 15/- & 5/- costs or 14 days, £2 & £ 1 costs.

Obstructing Highway: 10/- or 7 days.

Failure to Stop: 10/- or 7 days; £2 or 21 days.

No Silencer: 10/- or 7 days; £2 & 6/- costs.

Failure to sound Horn: 4/-; 11/6.

Brakes: 4/-; 6/-; 7/6; £1 or 14 days.

Tax: 9/-; 10/- plus 10/- costs, 14/-; 16/-; £ 1-10/-.

Failure to notify of Change of Ownership: 10/-.

Drunk in Charge: £ 1-15/6 or 21 days.

Negligent Driving: £ 1/10-; £2.

Pillion Carrying: 4/-; 10/-.

Appendix 9.

Lyrics to 'Riding in the TT Races.'

**This is probably the best-remembered motorcycling related song
of the period.**

"Riding in the TT races"

If there's one thing that I like' it's riding around on my motorbike
I'm a speed king when I once begin.
I once won first prize, two and six, I know all the dirt bike dirty tricks.
I'm a marvel when I'm out to win.
In a fifty mile race, I am the best I ride five miles and skid the rest.

CHORUS

So come along and see me riding in the TT races
Easier than hopscotch beating all the top notch aces

I've been riding all my life I started quite small
I've ridden fairy cycles aye and scooters and all
Hear the people cheer me when they see me steering backwards
Down the hill I go at breakneck speed
See me coming down the street, with the women posed on the pillion seat
Oh come along and see me riding at the TT race

Come along and see me riding in the TT races
Easier than hopscotch beating all the top notch aces
Once my bike was hard to ride but I didn't mind
Until I found it'd hitched a charabanc on behind
Everybody scaring I'm such a daring rider
My insides rattles when I go the pace
My ribs begin to shake about, there's all my spare parts sticking out
Oh come along and see me riding in the TT race
(Big ukulele solo)

With me gears in reverse, the other way around I'll finish first
So come along and see me riding in the TT race
HA -Ha-HA -Ha-ha aha ha ha ha

Gifford/Cliffe, 1936.

Appendix 10.

Vickers News Material.

This relates mainly to the Armstrong Whitworth Motor Club and is derived from material found in *Vickers News*, a journal of the Vickers Armstrong Whitworth Company. This data is held at Cambridge University Library Manuscripts Room, catalogue no: B109.

Vickers News material.

The following poem illustrates the frustration with the antiquated law regarding the speed limit of 20mph, which was not removed until 1930. This was in force at a time when motor vehicles were able to travel much faster, and the majority of motorists did so. It is taken from *Vickers News*, Mar 1925, p.194.

A Rhyme of the Road.

J. Timothy Huss was a fast-driving cuss,
With danger he constantly flirted,
Till he had a bad dream, since when it would seem,
That Timothy's really converted.

He firmly declared that he felt a bit scared,
Of the place – well, in presence of ladies,
We wont use the word, though it does seem absurd,
To refer to it mildly as Hades.

For one night Tim woke in a strong smell of smoke,
And a demon was holding his hand,
Then they passed through a portal, where this recent mortal,
Beheld a most beautiful land.

There were avenues wide, each an engineer's pride,
And a thousand miles long, broadly curving,
'Gas, sixpence a tank full,' read Tim, 'Gee, I'm thankful,'
Thought he, 'That they judged me deserving.'

'This is Heaven,' he said. But his guide shook his head,
'No,' said he, 'your good points were so scanty,
I regret you've been routed to that place you doubted,
Described by the late Mr. Dante.

Then he showed Tim a sign on that avenue fine,
Speed Limit, Twelve Miles, 'Mark that well,'
Said the demon, 'Go faster, you'll meet real disaster.'
'You are right,' said poor Tim, 'This is Hell.'

Hurricane Stan.

Vickers News was the monthly publication of the Vickers Armstrongs Whitworth group of companies. Its contents consisted of reports of technical developments and projects, then bulletins and reports from the various sections and works of the company, regarding sporting and social events. The following is of interest as it gives some idea of the activities indulged in by the workforce, and especially an insight into the operation of the motor club.

Example of contents of works reports from July 1934:

This illustrates the various sporting and social activities indulged in by the workforce. Each section of the company had an often-whimsical title for its contribution:

London Calling: Tennis, golf, swimming.

R. Bobby Ltd.: Tennis, bowls, cricket.

Signals from Southampton: Rowing, tennis, bowling, cricket, swimming.

Weybridge, (Vickers Aviation): Athletics, bowls, cricket, tennis, men's hockey.

Barrow Breezes: Silver band, golf, gliding, cricket, tennis, bowls.

News from Crayford: Rifle shooting, rugby, cricket, bowls, ambulance corps, rowing.

Dartford Doings: Football, tennis, cricket.

Elswick News: Apprentice's welfare club, cricket, bowls, tennis, golf, motor club, camera club, rugby.

It is the Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne section of the company, which is of particular interest, as it ran the Vickers Armstrongs Whitworth Motor Club. Owners of all types of motor vehicle were welcome to join the club, but it contained a strong motorcycling membership. Interest in motoring, within the company can originally be found at the Weybridge works, which formed the Motor and Cycling Club in October 1926.⁷ It began with a membership of 40 and intended to do 'Sunday runs.' In March 1927, it held a dinner at the Blue Anchor in Byfleet, where members danced to the Charleston and listened to saxophone music.⁸

In February 1928, the Elswick branch announced that the Armstrongs Whitworth Motor Club, which had been formed in July 1927, had 80 members, and were organising social runs, and an inter-works trial with C. A. Parsons Ltd. Non-employees were to have associate membership.⁹ The Weybridge club is mentioned only once after this in the same year, when it announced its annual general meeting in January.¹⁰ It is not known whether the club disbanded as no further mention is made in articles published during the years under investigation.

⁷ *Vickers News* Oct 1926, p.107

⁸ *Vickers News* Mar 1927, p.273

⁹ *Vickers News*, Feb 1928 p.272

¹⁰ *Vickers News* Feb 1928 p.281

In according with the usual practice of awarding prestigious positions to people of some social standing, Captain G. H. Harrison filled the position of chairman at the AWMC during this period.¹¹

An article in the June 1929 edition shows how motorcyclists had to be inventive. 'Motorcycling in the Old Days,' by *Nixio* tells of how an innovative motorcyclist, when meeting with adversity on a pioneer machine, had to improvise by running a petrol engine on acetylene carbide gas as a 'get you home,' when out of petrol, via a pipe from the carbide generator to the surface carburettor. The writer also tells of using a petrol lighter to substitute a spark, and of making engine valves from pennies and bolts.¹² Dirt track racers are referred to as 'Dracers,' and the rider of a sports machine as a 'Super Sports Tyro.'

In early January 1930, the club changed its name to the Vickers Armstrongs Whitworth Motor Club. Annual subscriptions for members intending to be fully RAC affiliated were: Car, £1.10s, Light car up to 1100cc, 17s, Motorcycle, 15s.¹³

In May 1930, the president of the club was Commander E. R. Micklem, RN.¹⁴ In December of 1930 the club organised a route-finding competition. In August of 1931 a fault-finding competition was run.¹⁵ In August 1932, rules were published for an obstacle race and solo blindfold race, held during a club event.¹⁶

In the absence of a National Health Service, the ACU ran an Hospital Donation Insurance scheme. In the North East Centre, the VAWMC reported that there were 750 participants. £42 had been given to local hospitals and no claims had been made. It was claimed that, '...motorcycling was not as dangerous as thought by some.' This was discussed at a meeting held at 'Tilley's Tearooms' in Blackett Street, Newcastle.¹⁷

The intrepid nature of the motorist is called into question in a bulletin in January 1933. The VAWMC held a social run to Blackpool in October, but all but one of the participants gave up due to atrocious weather.¹⁸

Signs that the Depression was having its effect upon the club are seen in an article in March 1935. Here, the club calls for more members from within the works, and was cutting down on Saturday runs. There was £2.18.10 in club funds in 1934.¹⁹ Things improved soon afterwards, when the club made a report of an influx of new members, as well as a perfect trial performance by O. F. H. Gilbert, a newcomer to the district.²⁰ In December of the same year, there was more good membership news, and mention of a tour in July, to see the 'Ancient

¹¹ *Vickers News* Jun 1928 p.435

¹² *Vickers News* Jun 1929 p.437

¹³ *Vickers News* Jan 1930 p.261

¹⁴ *Vickers News* May 1930 p.412

¹⁵ *Vickers News* Dec 1930 p.261 and Jul 1931 p.82.

¹⁶ *Vickers News* Aug 1932 p.86

¹⁷ *Vickers News* Jan 1931 p.304

¹⁸ *Vickers News* Jan 1933 p. 313

¹⁹ *Vickers News* Mar 1935 p.850

²⁰ *Vickers News* Jul 1935 p.28

rocky maps of Rothbury and Wooler districts,' conducted by '*Vagabond*' of the Newcastle Evening Chronicle.²¹

The enterprising nature of some of the workforce is shown in a July 1936 article where Mr. W. Jackson, a fitter at the Dartford works, built his own motorcycle, a 'Silver Streak,' using an Austin Seven sidevalve engine.²²

These occasional articles were curtailed in October 1939 when the VAWMC understandably saw fit to suspend all trials, social runs, etc. owing to the 'European situation.'²³

²¹ *Vickers News* Dec 1935 p.249

²² *Vickers News* Jun 1937 p.511

²³ *Vickers News* Oct 1939 p.154

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MSS 19a/2/30/6.

MSS 19a/3/7/9.

MSS 19a/7/PE/2/31-33.

MSS 204/1/1/4.

MSS 204/1/1/10.

MSS 204/1/1/15.

MSS 204/3/1/15.

Vintage Motor Cycle Club Archives, Burton-Upon-Trent.

Various loose documents.

Oral Interviews undertaken by the Author:

From respondents comprising of persons involved with motorcycling during the interwar period. Acquired through advertising in newspapers, enthusiast journals, and the trade press. Recordings are in the possession of the author.

Respondent 1, Jack Gascoigne: born Doncaster 1914. Electrical machinist. Interviewed 20/06/02.

Respondent 2, Agnes Rutter: born Croxdale, County Durham, 1922. Shopworker. Interviewed 02/08/02.

Respondent 3, Ken Griffin: born Leeds 1916. Printing machine salesman. Interviewed 02/09/02.

Respondent 4, George Williamson: born Woodland, County Durham, 1910. Van driver. Interviewed 15/10/02.

Respondent 5, Doris Milburn: born Crook, County Durham, 1926. Biology lecturer. Interviewed 17/10/02.

Respondent 6, Ernie Cheeseman: born South Moor, County Durham, 1917. Soldier. Interviewed 11/12/02.

Respondent 7, Mr. Owen – Smith: born Monmouthshire 1924. Mechanical engineer. Interviewed 11/09/03.

Respondent 8, Sidney Clark: born Middlesbrough, Cleveland, 1928. Bakery driver. Interviewed 23/08/04.

Respondent 9, Lance Robson: born Elsdon, Northumberland 1916. Insurance official. Interviewed 15/12/04.

Respondent 10, Charles Edmund ‘Titch’ Allen OBE BEM: (founder of the VMCC), born Cotgrave, Nottingham 1915. Journalist, motorcycle accessory salesman. Interviewed 06/10/05.

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